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ENTERED AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, N. Y., AT SECOND CLASS MAIL RATES.

Vol. XXV.

Published Every
Wednesday.

Beadle & Adams, Publishers,

98 WILLIAM STREET, N. Y., November 12, 1884.

Ten Cents a Copy.
\$5.00 a Year.

No. 316

LAFITTE'S LIEUTENANT; Or, Theodore, the Child of the Sea.

A SEQUEL TO "LAFITTE, THE PIRATE OF THE GULF."

BY PROF. J. H. INGRAHAM.



"MY WORD DOUBTED, MYSELF SCORNE, AND MY SERVICES REFUSED! BY HEAVEN! AS THEY REFUSE MY AID THE INVADERS SHALL HAVE IT."

Lafitte's Lieutenant;

OR,

Theodore, the Child of the Sea.

A Sequel to "Lafitte, the Pirate of the Gulf."

BY PROF. J. H. INGRAHAM.

Revised and Edited

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

CHAPTER I.

A PIRATE'S TEMPTATION.

THE scene of my story lies among the bayous that, like a network, lie between the city of New Orleans and the Gulf or Bay of Barrataria, that sheet of water made famous as the haunt of the famous Lafitte, the noted pirate admiral of the early years of the present century.

The time was one pleasant afternoon, several weeks prior to the battle of New Orleans.

Adown one of these bayous, and heading for the Gulf, a long boat was working its way, impelled by half a score of oarsmen, who sent it along at a swift pace with their strong and steady stroke.

The men were in sailor garb, wore red skull-caps, and were armed to the teeth.

About them was the air of men who were engaged in some reckless calling.

In the stern-sheets sat two persons of a different stripe from the men.

One of these was a tall, splendidly-formed man, attired in an undress naval uniform, and reclining at ease upon the cushions of the boat.

His face was handsome, but very stern, and his eyes had a far-away look, as though he was constantly dreaming of a past that was full of sorrow to him.

He too was armed, but his pistols and sword were of the finest workmanship.

By the side of this distinguished-looking individual sat a youth whose appearance was most attractive.

He was tall, slender and graceful, but his shoulders were broad and his frame sinewy, indicating great strength.

He, too, was in seaman's garb, such a dress as was worn by the American middies of that day.

There was a frankness about the youth's face strangely winning, but it was also full of daring and resolution.

In the bow of the boat, listlessly watching the course ahead, as the boat sped along, was a hideously deformed African slave.

The three persons thus described, were Lafitte, the Pirate of the Gulf, his *protege* and lieutenant, Theodore, the hero of this romance, and Cudjoe, the slave of the famous buccaneer admiral.

Their destination was the island haunt of Lafitte, where was the rendezvous of his fleet, and he had just come from New Orleans, where he had been to offer his services, and those of his men, to aid in the defense of the city against the British army, then contemplating an attack upon General Jackson and his army of hastily gathered volunteers.

A short while before a British vessel, flying a flag of truce, had visited Lafitte's island, and through officers sent on shore, had made to the chief most tempting offers, if he would become their ally in the advance upon New Orleans.

These offers had been the rank of captain for himself, in the royal navy, a large amount of gold, and pardon for himself and his men.

Lafitte had appointed a time when the vessel should return for his answer, and then, taking his boat, had boldly gone to New Orleans, where a price was set upon his head, and invading the quarters of Governor Claiborne, had placed the proposals of the British before him.

Governor Claiborne had placed implicit trust in the outlaw chief and told him he would do all in his power for him—Lafitte then offering his services to the Americans.

Leaving the Governor he had started upon his return, leaving Theodore, his boy lieutenant, to get the Governor's answer, after placing before a council of city officers the report of the pirate chief.

Theodore had followed after his benefactor and commander, and given to him the Governor's reply, only a few moments before they are introduced to the reader, rowing down the bayou.

This document Lafitte grasped in hand, awaiting the arrival of the boat at the cabin of an old Indian, who dwelt alone on the banks of the bayou.

At last the cabin came in view, the boat touched the shore, and Lafitte, walking off by himself, read the reply to his offers.

Its tenor was as follows:

"M. Lafitte must regret equally with myself, the decision of the council.

"It is against your sincerity, and the genuineness of the letters you present as given you by the British officers.

"Be patient, sir, and take no rash steps, for I have unlimited confidence in you, and will consult with the commanding general regarding you, at the earliest convenience.

"In the meanwhile remain firm, and your wishes for honor and pardon may yet be achieved."

"And this is the way my offers are received!" said Lafitte fiercely.

"My word doubted, myself scorned, and my services refused! By Heaven! as they refuse my aid the invaders shall have it.

"To your boat, men!" he called out in a voice that rung threateningly, and springing back to his seat, he was soon again gliding down the bayou.

As he rowed along, his thoughts surged wildly through his brain, and he lived life over again in bitter memories.

He remembered his boyhood upon the Kennebec in Maine, where he had dwelt with his brother Henri, and his cold stern father.

He recalled how his father had ever loved Henri, yet seemed to hate him, why he never knew.

Then came to their home his cousin Gertrude, left to the guardianship of his father, and, loving her with his whole soul, he had beheld her turn with love to his gentle brother.

It had been madness to him, and one night, knowing that Henri and Gertrude had that day pledged their love to each other, he had, in his jealous frenzy, become Cain-accursed, and fled appalled from his home.

Oh! the sorrows, the miseries of the years that had followed, when he roamed over sea and land, to in the end become known as the Pirate Lafitte.

Again he remembered how he had taken from the wreck, the boy, Theodore, and reared him upon a pirate deck, and that over him the noble youth held influence for good only.

Some time before he had captured a lovely Spanish girl, the beautiful Constanza Velasquez.

This beautiful being he had loved ardently, and had striven hard to win her love; but Theodore had urged him to release her, and told him that she loved another, a noble Frenchman, the commander of a frigate then cruising in the Gulf.

His better nature triumphing, Lafitte had released Constanza Velasquez, to soon after find her again in his power, recaptured by one of the vessels of his pirate fleet.

And now, the count, the lover of Constanza, also fell a prisoner into the pirates' hands.

Again virtuous resolve triumphed, and Lafitte decided to allow the two lovers to depart in peace, when the count, fearing to trust in the honor of a pirate, had made his escape with his lady-love, through the aid of Juana, an old negress in the retreat of the outlaws.

All these memories for good and bad in his life came to him as he sat in the stern of the boat, with his arms folded and his head dropped despondingly upon his breast—an attitude he insensibly fell into after the first burst of passion, elicited by the result of his application, had passed away.

His better resolves held again their influence over him; his anger and resentment by degrees subsided, and he had come to the determination to exile himself, disband his followers, and depart forever from a country he was thought too base to serve.

"I have won the confidence, and, I believe, the respect of one honorable man. This, at least, I will endeavor to retain," he said, abruptly addressing Theodore. "He has said he will counsel with the general in-chief. I place my cause, then, in the hands of a brave man. Suppose I see him myself? Hal! that will do!—I will! England," he cried, with energy, "thou hast not made me a renegade yet! nor," he added, mentally, "will you, Constanza, find me recreant to my pledged faith. I will not let the prejudiced decisions of a few men thus turn me from the straight-forward path I have chosen.

"Ship your oars, men!" he added, aloud, as they came to a little inlet, at the foot of a mound, just large enough to contain the boat.

The dripping oars rose simultaneously into the air, and then fell lengthwise upon the thwarts. Cudjoe sprang out, as the bows touched the bank, and secured the boat to a tree. Lafitte, warning his men not to go far away, accompanied by Theodore, stepped on shore and ascended one of those mounds of shells thrown up by the Indians, long before the earliest era of American history, filled with human bones, and evidently designed either as religious or funeral monuments. From the prevalence of the former opinion, this congregation of mounds, where our party stopped, has been denominated "The Temple." On the highest of them, according to the tradition of the country, the idolatrous worshippers preserved a perpetual fire. Some attempts, at one period, had been made to fortify it, traces of which still existed.

"Go up the mound, Theodore, and see if you can discover anything moving in either bayou. I shall give the men an hour's rest, and then start again," said Lafitte.

He stopped on the summit of a small mound, and leaning against a cypress tree, soon became

wrapped in reflections upon the present crisis of his life, and the probable issue of his plans.

Presently, his eye was arrested by a white object, dimly seen in the twilight, rolling along on the ground near his feet. It was globular, and at every turn displayed the eyeless sockets and hideous grin of a skull. He gazed upon it with surprise, but did not move; and a fascination seemed to chain him to the spot, and fasten his eyes upon the loathsome object.

It came nearer and nearer, and now struck with a hollow sound against his foot. He was about to recoil from the fearful contact, when the head and claws of a crab were protruded from the cavities, as if to ascertain and remove the obstacle to its advancement.

As he thus discovered the cause of this strange locomotion, with a smile of derision at this humiliation of his species, he raised the skull with its inmate and gazed on it for a moment, with a lip, in whose expression bitterness was mingled with contempt.

"And this is MAN! the image of God! the tenement of immortal mind! Poor crab, little dost thou know what kingly throne thou hast usurped! Well, why not a crab as well as brain! The skull can walk the earth full as well, and to as good a purpose! And this is our end!" he added, "to become *thus* at last!—a habitation for reptiles! And shall I too come to this! Shall this head, now throbbing with life," and he raised his hand to his temples, "which can think—plan—originate—at last be no more than this!—so helpless as to be borne about by such a creeping thing! Where is that conscious something, which once supplied this crab's place? Who has displaced it? Death!—and what is death?—Methinks it were better to be like this glaring ball, than to be as I now am! Here," he continued, placing his hand upon it, "here is no sense of passing events; of joy or suffering; of treachery or friendship; of despair or ambition; of praise or insult. See—I can place my foot upon it, and it rises not against me to avenge the insult! Happy, happy nothingness! But is it nothingness? Although the mind lives not in this glaring shell, which, without tongue, discourses most eloquently to the living, may it not exist somewhere? Here I see it not. It is perceptible to no sense. Yet reason—hope—fear, tell me it is not extinct. Heaven never made man for such an end as *this*! There must be deeper purpose than we can fathom—a cause remoter than we can reach, why we were made. Eternity!—thou art no bugbear with which to frighten children. I feel—would to God I felt it not!—thou art a stern and fearful reality.

"Well, my boy, saw you aught?" he inquired hastily, resuming his usual tone and manner as the youth appeared.

"No, monsieur. The night thickens so fast that it is impossible to see far down the bayous. I think we shall have a storm."

"There is no doubt of it, if the heavens speak truly," said Lafitte, gazing upon masses of clouds drifting low above their heads, increasing in density and blackness every moment, and gathering to a head with that rapidity characteristic of storms in this climate.

"Theodore, tell the men to spread the tarpaulin over the boat to shelter them from the rain."

The youth communicated the order, and was returning, when a flash of lightning, accompanied by a peal of thunder, loud and abrupt, like the near explosion of artillery, gleamed in the woods, and rove to the roots the cypress against which the chief leaned, with the skull still extended in his hand, and laid him prostrate, and as senseless as the shell he held, upon the ground.

With an exclamation of surprise and terror, Theodore sprang forward, and kneeling by his side, called loudly upon the crew to aid in resuscitating him. They bore him to the boat by the command of the youth, who, recollecting the hut of a fisherman situated about a mile below the Temple, ordered the men to resume their oars and pull to that place.

CHAPTER II.

THE PIRATE'S REPLY.

WITH the head of his friend and benefactor upon his lap, and in great agitation of mind, Theodore guided the boat through the bayou, his course lighted by the lightning, which now became incessant.

"Ho, the boat!" shouted a voice from the bank, as a flash of lightning showed them the fisherman's cot, in a bend of the bayou.

"Grand Terre!" replied Theodore.

"Grand Terre it is," answered the man, who challenged, coming from behind a tree. An English musket was in his hand and an old canvas cap on his head, covered with the signs of the cross, painted in red and black colors. He also wore a blue woolen shirt and a pair of duck trousers, cut off at the knee, leaving the portion of his legs below it bare. His head was gray and bushy, and an opulence of grizzly beard and whiskers encircled his tawny face, which was marked with arched brows and dark lambent eyes, a sharp aquiline nose, small mouth, and thin lips, displaying when parted a row of even

and very white teeth, which seemed to bid defiance to the ravages of time!

"Where is the captain?" he inquired.

"Senseless from a stroke of lightning," replied the youth; "we must claim your hospitality, Manuelillo."

"*Pobre capitan!* with all my heart. Bring him into the cot, *hombres!*" he said to the men. "*Pobre capitan—es mateo—no! Senor Theodore!*"

"No! there is life, but he is insensible."

In a short time, the chief was laid upon a bed of dried grass and rushes, constituting the couch of the fisherman, who in addition to his piscatorial profession, was also privateersman or smuggler, as interest prompted, or taste allured.

Slowly yielding to their exertions and skill, the stagnant blood once more flowed through his veins and he returned to consciousness. In the morning a fever succeeded, which increased in violence during the day. That night he became delirious, and wildly raved like a maniac—calling on "Constanza," "Henri," "Gertrude,"—names often on his burning lips during his illness. For five days his fever and delirium continued, without abatement. His disorder then assumed a more favorable character, and he began rapidly to convalesce.

On the seventh day just before noon, as he was seated at the door of the hut under the shade of a tree, giving orders to his boatmen, who were preparing the barge for departure that evening, a heavy cannonading reached his ears, borne upon the south wind over the level country, from the quarter of Barrataria which was about twenty miles distant.

"Do you hear that, sir?" said Theodore, from within, who, during his illness, had watched over him with untiring assiduity and tenderness.

"What means it, Manuel?" demanded the chief, starting.

"I don't know, senor; there must be some fighting between your vessels and the cruisers."

"I suspect as much. Quick, with that boat, men!" he added, with animation. "We must away from this."

With a strength unlooked for, he stepped into the boat, after warmly grasping the hand of the old fisherman, and thanking him for his attention and kindness, and was soon swiftly moving on his way to the island.

As he approached, the firing increased, and became more distinct. Night set in, however, before they reached the mouth of the bayou, from which, as they emerged into the bay, they could see, far over the water, a flame apparently rising from a burning vessel. The cannonading had ceased several hours, and it was now too dark to see across the bay, or distinguish the outline of the island.

"There has been warm work at Barrataria, Theodore," said Lafitte. "I am afraid we have been attacked by a superior force."

"It may be Massa Cap'um Pattyson," said Cudjoe; "he t'ucky catch Cudjoe, and make sailor ob him, when in de boat, when you gone to see de Governor."

"What is that?" said Lafitte, quickly. "Press you!"

"I now recollect," answered Theodore, "as I went for the Governor's reply, it was rumored in the streets, that Commodore Patterson was completing his crew by every exertion, and that he was to sail the same evening, on some expedition. It may have been destined for Barrataria."

"You are right, Theodore; he has no doubt attacked our camp. Set the sail, and spring to your oars, men; we must know at once if our fears are true."

Having raised their sail, their speed increased, and shooting rapidly away from the mouth of the bayou, they steered across the bay. When within a league of the island, a barge full of men was discovered a short distance ahead.

"Ship your oars, and see to your arms!" said Lafitte, shifting the helm so as to weather the boat. "We are now more likely to meet foes than friends in these waters."

As he spoke, the strange boat hailed, and the click of several pistols was heard from her by the pirate and his party, who answered the hostile preparation with similar sounds of defiance.

"Ho! the boat, ahoy!" hailed a voice in Spanish.

"It is Sebastiano," said Theodore, hastily, as he recognized the voice of the person hailing.

"*Camaradas!*" replied Lafitte.

"Ah, captain, is that you?" exclaimed a rough voice, with a strong French accent. "We thought you had gone to pay off old scores in the other world."

"I have been on business, Belluche, connected with our safety, and have been detained by illness. But the news, the news! Lieutenant Belluche," he added with impatience, as the boats came in contact.

"Bad enough, my good captain," said Sebastiano, interposing in reply, "bad enough for one day's work; in proof of which, senor, I refer you to this handful of men, who are all that remain of the pretty Julie, who, by the same token, is burned to the water's edge. May the *grande diable* have the burning of

those who compelled me with my own hand to set her on fire. But it was necessary, captain. I can prove to you it was vile necessity."

"Be brief, Sebastiano! What has happened? Who are the aggressors, Belluche? What means the firing I have heard to-day? Be brief, and tell me!"

"This morning," said the whilom captain of the Lady of the Gulf, "between eight and nine, we saw a fleet of small vessels and gunboats standing in for the island. Our squadron lay at anchor within the pass, and on seeing the fleet, I ordered the Carthaginian flag to be hoisted on all the vessels. As the strangers approached, I got under way with the whole fleet, including prizes, which made ten in number, and formed in order of battle, in case the intentions of the fleet should be hostile. As the evidences of their hostile character thickened, I sent boats in various directions to the mainland to give the alarm, and ordered my men to light fires along the coast, as signals to our friends ashore that we were about to be attacked. The enemy stood in, and formed into a line of battle near the entrance of the harbor. Their force consisted of six gun-vessels, a tender, mounting one six-pounder, and full of men, and a launch, mounting one twelve-pound carronade, and a large schooner, called the Carolina."

"Well provided to assail our post—a second armada," said Lafitte, ironically; "but go on."

"On discovering these demonstrations of battle on their part, and not being in the best condition to withstand them, I hoisted a white flag at the fore on board the Lady of the Gulf, an American flag at the mainmast, and the Carthaginian flag at the topping lift. The enemy replied, with a white flag at his main. I now took my boat, and went from vessel to vessel to ascertain the disposition of the crews for fighting, and none but Captain Getzendanner, and Sebastiano and their men were for awaiting the attack. I in vain tried to convince them of the expediency of fighting to save our vessels."

"The cowards! ready enough to fight when there is spoil to be won; but chary enough of their metal when our honor is at stake. What did you then?"

"I then determined that the Lady of the Gulf should not fall into the enemy's hands, and telling Captain Getzendanner what I intended to do, I returned on board, and fixing a train in the hold, and setting the rigging on fire, I took to the boats with my crew. Getzendanner and Sebastiano did the same, while the other cowardly poltroons deserted their vessels and took to their oars, and pulled for the mainland. The enemy no sooner saw the flames rising from the schooner, than he hauled down the flag of truce, and made the signal for battle; hoisting with it a broad white flag, bearing the words, 'PARDON TO DESERTERS,' knowing that we had not a few from the army and navy among us."

"Heaven send them safe back to them, with a halter about their necks!" interrupted Lafitte, angrily, on hearing the treachery of his men. "But what further?"

"The enemy ran in and took possession of the vessels, while a detachment landed upon the island, and destroyed our buildings and fortifications. All this I witnessed from the mainland, where we had retired. The enemy's fleet is now outside, including our own, numbering in all seventeen sail. They will probably get under way in the morning for the Balize."

"We," interposed Sebastiano, who had waited with much impatience for an opportunity to speak, "have just returned from the island, where I have been since they left, to have ocular demonstration of the true state of things, and an old woman might easier hold good her pantry against a party of half-starved recruits, than we have held the old island; and this admits of the clearest demonstration, captain."

Lafitte listened to this recital with various and conflicting emotions. He did not reply for some moments after the commander of the Lady of the Gulf had completed his account of the attack upon the piratical hold, by the American flotilla. This expedition was under the command of that naval officer, whom we first introduced to the reader, inspecting a map with the commanding general. He was a young and gallant man, whose ambition to signalize his command and benefit his country by the destruction of the buccaneering horde, which had so long infested the southwestern shores of Louisiana, had rendered him, with the majority of the council called by the Governor, incredulous to the extraordinary proffers of the pirate.

If blame in reference to this decision could be attached to either party, Lafitte felt that it was justly fastened upon himself.

"It is right," he said, after reflecting for a few moments upon the communication of his officer. "It is but justice. Not them—not him—do I censure, but myself—my past career of crime and contempt for those healthy laws which govern society. I blame them not. It would have been strange if they had believed me."

After a few moments' pause, he added, earn-

estly, "This shall not change my determination; they shall yet know and believe that I acted from motives they must honor. They shall yet acknowledge that they have injured me by their decision. Injured! But let that pass—my country shall have my arm and a single cutlass, if no more!"

"And mine! Wherever you are, my benefactor, you will find me by your side!" exclaimed the youth, warmly.

"I knew it, Theodore, I knew it," replied Lafitte, returning the enthusiastic grasp of his hand.

"Whereaway, now, Belluche?"

"To the city, captain! We hear of fighting about to go on there; we may perhaps find something to do."

"Sebastiano—Belluche, my worthy comrades and friends, and you, my brave men! the Americans have destroyed our fleet; but they have only done what was right. If I know you all in that boat, like myself, you are Americans by birth or adoption. Fight not against your country, then; draw every cutlass in her defense; forgive her injuries and bleed for her. The tyrant of England seeks to enslave her; meet his minions foot to foot, blade to blade. Endeavor to atone for your wrongs to your country by devotion to her cause. Fighting is your trade—but fight now on the right side. What say you, my men? Belluche—Sebastiano, stand you for or against your country in this struggle?"

"*Viva Louisiana—viva la patria—viva Lafitte!*" shouted the men in reply.

"This is as it should be, my brave fellows! If you are faithful in the cause you espouse, Government may yet wink at the past; and then if any of you choose to follow honest livelihoods, the way will be open before you. To the city! I will soon follow; gather our scattered forces, and persuade them to adopt the same course. You will hear from me on the third evening from this at the cabaret of your old companion, Pedro Torrio, on Rue Royale. I must now visit the island. Where is Getzendanner?"

"He has taken the western bayou to the city, I suspect," replied Belluche.

"Tell him our plans, if you meet with him, and hold out to him pardon. He will acquiesce, I think," said Lafitte, laughing; "for there is a fair frow in New York, he would fain should supply his lost rib; but she will not take him without a license from the President. I depend on you both," he added, seriously, "to collect our followers, and unite them to the American party."

With a shout from the crews of each, the boats separated, and in an hour afterward, Lafitte reached the island, and secured his boat in the inlet, from which, under very different circumstances, he had unmoored it ten days before, on embarking to lay before the Governor the letters of the British officers.

The next morning, having remained all night in the boat, he was awakened by the report of a gun. Rising, and gaining a slight elevation on the island, he discovered it to be the signal for the enemy's fleet to get under way with the prizes.

With calm and unchanging features, he watched their departure; and as the last sail disappeared on the horizon, he turned to Theodore and said:

"I have only to wait to give the Englishman his answer; and then," he added with a bitter smile, "return to New Orleans to welcome my captured fleet."

"There is a sail south of us!" exclaimed Theodore.

"I see it," replied the chief; "it may be the English brig coming in for my reply, although I did not expect her before evening."

The vessel which attracted their observation, in the course of an hour after being discovered, showed the square rig and armament of a brig-of-war. Approaching within half a mile of the shore, she sent off a boat, which pulled directly for the island.

"What answer shall you give them, monsieur?" inquired Theodore, doubtfully, watching the face of the outlaw, and anxious to know if he would accept the proposals of the British, now that he had received such treatment from the American Government.

Lafitte made no reply, but hastened to meet the boat, which grounded, as Theodore spoke, upon the beach.

"You are welcome to my fortress, gentlemen! You have doubtless come for my answer," he said, addressing the midshipman who commanded the boat. "So your captain did not like to trust himself on shore again. Well," he added, in a melancholy voice, "he might have come now in all safety, for he would have little to fear. What says Captain Lockyer?"

"He desired me to give you this sealed paper, and await your answer to his proposed alliance with you," replied the youth, giving him a packet superscribed with his address.

"You have not long to wait," replied Lafitte, receiving it; and with a pencil, he wrote upon the back:

"NO TERMS WITH TYRANTS!"

"There is my answer!" he said, sternly, returning it to him.

Then taking the arm of Theodore, he walked away to his boat, which lay on the opposite side of the island.

CHAPTER III.

THE BARRATARIANS IN BATTLE.

THE subsequent events, immediately preceding the decisive battle of the eighth of January, having no material connection with our tale, we shall briefly pass by. Lafitte returned to the city, and again offered his services to his country, with those of as many of his former adherents as he could assemble.

After the disastrous capture of the American gunboats by the British, the invasion of the State was deemed inevitable. In the perilous condition of the country, it was thought good policy by those intrusted with the public safety to avail themselves of the services of men accustomed to war, and whose perfect knowledge of the coasts, and the various bayous leading from the sea to the capital, might render their aid of great importance to the enemy, who, it was now generally known, had in vain, and with great offers entreated them to repair to their standard. Although the expediency of uniting them to the American standard, was generally admitted, it was indispensably necessary that they should receive pardon for all real or supposed offenses against the laws. This could only be granted by the President of the United States. Governor Claiborne, whose faith in the outlaw remained unshaken, and who regretted the attack on Barrataria, so far as it rendered, by breaking them up, the forces of the outlaws less available to the country, conferred on the subject with the major-general in command.

The result of this conference was very different from that of the council convened by the Governor, and with the approbation of the commanding general, he issued the following general order:

"The Governor of Louisiana, informed that many individuals implicated in the offenses heretofore committed against the United States at Barrataria express a willingness at the present crisis to enroll themselves and march against the enemy—

"He does hereby invite them to join the standard of the United States, and is authorized to say, should their conduct in the field meet the approbation of the major-general, that that officer will unite with the Governor in a request to the President of the United States, to extend to each and every individual, so marching and acting, a free and full pardon."

These general orders were placed in the hands of Lafitte, who circulated them among his dispersed followers, most of whom readily embraced the conditions of pardon they held out. In a few days many brave men and skillful artillerymen, whose services contributed greatly to the safety of the invaded State flocked to the standard of the United States, and by their conduct, received the highest approbation of the commanding general.

In anticipation of our narrative, we will here mention, that previous to their adjournment, the Legislature of the State recommended the Barratarians as proper objects for the clemency of the President, who issued a proclamation upon the subject, bearing date the sixth of February, eighteen hundred and fifteen, and transmitted it, officially, to the Governor of Louisiana, by the Secretary of State, granting to them a full and entire pardon.

We will now return from this digression to Lafitte, the individual whose personal acts are the subject of our tale.

The morning of the eighth of January was ushered in with the discharge of rockets, the sound of cannon, and the cheers of the British advancing to the attack. The Americans, behind the breastwork, with calm intrepidity, awaited their approach. The enemy advanced in close column of sixty men in front, shouldering their muskets and carrying fascines and ladders. A storm of rockets preceded them. An incessant fire opened from the battery, which commanded the advance column as it approached. The musketry and rifles of the Kentuckians and Tennesseans joined the fire of the artillery, and in a few moments was heard along the line a ceaseless, rolling fire, whose tremendous noise resembled the continued reverberation of thunder. One of these guns, a twenty-four pounder, placed upon the breastwork, in the third embrasure from the river, drew forth—from the fatal skill and activity with which it was managed, even in the heat of battle—the admiration of both Americans and British; and became one of the points most dreaded by the advancing foe.

Here was stationed Lafitte, three of his lieutenants, Belluche, Sebastiano, and Getzendanner, already introduced to the reader, and a large band of his men, who, during the continuance of the battle, fought with unparalleled bravery. The British had been already twice driven back in the utmost confusion, with the loss of their commander-in-chief, and two general officers.

In the first attack of the British, a column pushed forward, between the levee and river; and so precipitate was their charge, that the outposts were forced to retire, closely pressed by the enemy. Before the batteries could check

them clearing the ditch, they gained the redoubt through the embrasures, leaping over the parapet, and overwhelming, by their superior force, the small party stationed there.

Lafitte, who was commanding, in conjunction with his officers, at one of the guns, no sooner saw the bold movement of the enemy, than, calling a few of his best men by name, with Theodore by his side, he sprang forward to the point of danger, and clearing the breastwork of the intrenchment, leaped, cutlass in hand, into the midst of the enemy. He was followed by a score of his men, whose courage, in many a hard-fought battle upon his own deck, had been often tested.

Astonished at the intrepidity which could induce men to leave their intrenchments and meet them hand to hand, and pressed by the suddenness of the charge, which was made with the recklessness, skill, and rapidity of practiced boarders, bounding upon the deck of an enemy's vessel, the British began to give way, two of their officers having already fallen before the cutlass of the pirate, as they were bravely encouraging their men by their inspiring shouts, and fearless example. All the energies of the British were now concentrated to scale the breastwork. While Lafitte and his followers, seconding a gallant band of volunteer riflemen, formed a phalanx which they in vain essayed to penetrate.

As the British column advanced to the attack, a small boat, propelled by two seamen, and containing a handsome man, in the dress of a British naval officer, after ascending the river unnoticed in the uproar and confusion of battle, touched the bank nearly opposite the center of the advancing column. The officer sprang out amid a shower of balls, which fell harmlessly around him; then drawing his sword, and loosening his pistols in his belt, he hastened forward to the head of the column, and side by side, with a gallant Scotchman, leaped into the redoubt.

Twice he mounted the breastwork and was hurled back to rise and again make the effort; his blue eyes emitting fire, and his sword flashing like a meteor as he hewed his way through the opposing breasts of the Americans.

At this moment, Lafitte bounded into the redoubt at the head of his men, and turned the tide of battle. The stranger, whose reckless daring and perseverance had, even in the midst of the fight, attracted the attention of both sides, was also pressed back with the retreating column. Yet, with an obstinacy which drew upon him the fire of the riflemen, and the cutlasses of the pirates, he stood his ground and fought with cool and determined courage. Every blow of his weapon laid a buccaneer dead at his feet.

The British, leaving their numerous dead, had retreated; yet he stood alone, pressed on every side and heedless of danger. His object seemed to be to press forward to the spot where stood the pirate chief, who was separated from him by half a dozen of his men. In vain they called upon him to surrender. His brow was rigid with desperate resolution, and his eye burned with a fierce expression, while his arm seemed endowed with the strength of a Hercules.

"Take him prisoner, but harm him not!" said Lafitte, struck with the daring of the man.

"Give back," cried the stranger, speaking for the first time. "Give way to my revenge! Pirate Lafitte! ravisher! murderer! I dare you to single combat!—coward!" and his voice rung clear amid the din of war.

"Ha, is it so? stand back, men. Hold, Sebastiano! leave him to me, if I am the game he seeks so rashly!"

The men, who had involuntarily given back at the sound of the stranger's voice, now left a path between him and his chief; and, before Lafitte, surprised at his conduct—but in his checkered life, not unused to adventure and danger in every shape—could bring his weapon to the guard, he received that of the stranger through his sword-arm.

"Not that vile stream; but your heart's blood," shouted the officer. "It is revenge I seek!" and with a headlong impetuosity that swallowed up every emotion but the present passion, he played his weapon with fatal skill about the breast of his antagonist, who required all his coolness and swordsmanship to save his life, for which it became evident to his men that he now only fought.

Theodore stood by the side of Lafitte, with his sword drawn, often involuntarily crossing simultaneously with him, the blade of the stranger, as some more skillful pass threatened his life. All at once his eyes, which were constantly fixed with an inquiring gaze upon his features, partially concealed by the visor of his cap, and nearly disguised by the dust and smoke of battle, lighted up with peculiar intelligence.

"Hold, senior! there is some error!" he said rapidly to Lafitte, and whispered in his ear.

The point of Lafitte's sword dropped, as he exclaimed, "Ha! thank God! I hurt him not!"

The stranger, without knowing the cause which produced, and in his eagerness, heedless of the defenseless state in which Lafitte had exposed his person by the act, plunged his sword

into his side, and would have run him quite through the body, had not Theodore dexterously caught the weapon upon the guard of his own.

Lafitte, murmuring—"This for Constanza's sake!" fell backward into the arms of Theodore and his followers.

Absorbed by the danger of their chief, they gave all their attention for the moment to him. When, the next instant, they turned to avenge him, the mysterious stranger, who had retired the moment he saw his object—the death of Lafitte—apparently accomplished, was mingling with the retreating column of the British.

Lafitte was borne within the intrenchment by his men, who found it useless to pursue his late antagonist. But as they reascended the breastwork, Theodore looked back with a searching eye, while foreboding apprehensions filled his mind, and saw the late antagonist of his chief, distinguished by his naval attire, step into the boat which had conveyed him to the scene of action; and, amidst the hurricane of iron raining around him, harmlessly, as if he bore a charmed life, move rapidly down the river, and soon disappear beneath the branches of the trees which overhung the water.

With the true spirit of Christianity, the doors of the churches and convents of the invaded city were thrown open to the wounded, not only of the defending army, but of the invading foe. To the Convent des Ursulines, one of these temporary hospitals in the heart of the city, Lafitte was borne by the attentive Theodore and a few of his most faithful adherents.

"Who have you there, my children?" inquired an aged priest with silvery hair flowing over the cape of his black robe, as the faithful buccaneers bore the litter on which lay their leader into the paved hall of the convent, and placed it against the wall. "He is a man of noble presence. I trust not one in high command?"

"It is of no importance, reverend father," said another of the priests, coming forward.

Theodore recognized in the speaker the padre Arnaud whom he had seen at Barrataria, the odor of whose sanctity had not availed to save Sebastiano's schooner, whose passenger he once had been, from being finally blown into the air. "It is enough," he added, "that he is wounded, and that his situation demands our charity."

"You say well, my son; call the physician, and we will have his wounds forthwith examined. Heaven grant he is not in danger!" he said, looking upward devotionally; "it were sad for sinful man to die without confession and absolution—but Heaven is merciful."

The father Arnaud, immediately on his entrance, had recognized Lafitte, who had once sent for him from Havana to confess and give general absolution to such of his men who were Roman Catholics. The father thought if he was known as the outlaw whose name had struck terror throughout the Mexican seas, he might not, among the simple-minded sisterhood and fraternity, receive the attention due to every human being, in such a situation. He, therefore, with true benevolence of heart, sought to conceal the real character of the invalid, and hastened to bring to him medical aid.

His wound was probed and dressed by the surgeon, who declared his case by no means dangerous, and that the loss of blood had rendered it only apparently so; adding, that sleep, quiet and attention would in a few days restore him to health. Recommending him to the care of Theodore and one or two aged nuns, who were bending over him with commiseration expressed in their calm faces, he left them with professional abruptness, to attend to a wounded soldier, just brought in from the field.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NUN AND THE PIRATE.

UPON a cot within the walls of the convent, Lafitte lay wounded and bleeding.

It was some days after the battle of New Orleans, when the Americans, under Jackson, had beaten back Pakenham and his British army.

The wounded man had borne a conspicuous part in that well-fought fight, and he had won for himself and his followers pardon for his crimes.

Now, wounded nigh unto death, as he believed, he lay under the sacred shelter of a convent.

From his home, and from her he loved, and for whom he had branded his hand with a brother's blood, he had never heard since the night he fled, Cain-accursed from the scene.

In all his wanderings he had not forgotten, though.

In all his scenes of danger and carnage, he had not drowned bitter thought, and yet now, as if soothed by the influence of the time and place, he slept.

On the third evening the wound of the chief closed, and he was rapidly convalescing, having received permission from the surgeon to leave the convent the succeeding day.

The eve of that day the halls and corridors of the convent were deserted. Silence reigned undisturbed, save by the light step of a nun moving in her vigils around the couch of an invalid,

the deep breathing of some sufferer and the sighing of the winds among the foliage of the evergreens, waving their branches with melancholy music. At the extremity of the hall stood the couch of the chief, above which a narrow window opened upon the court-yard adjoining the edifice. The wind blew in refreshingly upon his temples, and the melody of a distant mocking-bird, which loves to wake the echoes of night, fell soothingly, as he listened to its varied notes, upon his ear.

Under these soothing influences the wounded chief insensibly slept, but his slumbers were soon disturbed by a scarcely-heard foot-fall at the extremity of the passage. He opened his eyes, and by the dim light of a lamp suspended from the ceiling of the corridor, he discovered near him the graceful form of one of the nuns, who had often bent above him in his feverish moments, and whose presence had exerted a strange power over his thoughts, and even the pulsations of his heart, which became irregular and wild when she was near.

He felt there was a mystery around her, in some way connected with himself; but how, or why, after long hours given to thought and imagination, he could not conjecture. Her voice he had never yet heard, but her slight fingers placed upon his pulse or throbbing temples, strangely thrilled the blood in his veins. But all his speculations respecting her were futile, and at last, wearied with pursuing the vague associations her presence, air and manner called up, he would close his eyes, articulating, "Strange! strange—very strange!" and fall into a disturbed sleep, in which visions of his boyhood and its scenes of love and strife, passed with wonderful distinctness before him; yet still, in all his dreams, the form of the nun was mysteriously mingled with other characters, which memory, with her magic wand, called up from the abyss of the past.

Giving no evidence of being conscious of her presence, he waited with a palpitating heart and with eyes closed, the approach of his midnight visitant. She came within a few feet of him and stopped, and shading her brow with her hand, from the light of the lamp above her, she gazed fixedly at the apparent sleeper, as if to be assured that he slept.

Her figure, as she bent forward in an attitude of natural grace, displayed faultless proportions. She was a little above the middle height of women, and her brow, exposed by her partly-drawn black veil, which, with a long robe of the same funeral hue, encircled her person, was calm and pale—paler, perhaps, from the contrast. Her features rivaled, in their Grecian accuracy of outline, the most perfect models from the chisel of Praxiteles; the color of her eye was deep blue—not the cold blue of northern skies, but the warm azure of sunny Italy. There dwelt within them a shade of melancholy, cast also over her whole face. Piety and devotion were written upon her seraphic face, from which care and sorrow, not illness, had faded the roses and freshness of youth.

Yet she was not a youthful maiden! Perhaps seven and twenty summers and winters had passed, with their changes and vicissitudes, over her head. Her general air and manner was that of humble resignation to some great and deep-settled sorrow. No one could gaze upon her without interest; no one without respect. Among her sister nuns she was regarded as but little lower than a saint in heaven; by the devotees of her church, her blessing and prayers were sought next to that of their tutelar divinities. Among the sisterhood she was called St. Marie. Her real name, for which had been assumed this religious one, was concealed from all but the superior, during the twelve or thirteen years she had been an inmate of the convent.

Apparently satisfied that her patient slept, the nun approached him, and uttered a pious ejaculation, while she raised her fine eyes heavenward, and laid a finger lightly upon his temple.

"He is better! thank thee, Heaven, and sweet Mary, Mother! His sleep is calm, and he is much—much better!" and her voice, (as she spoke low,) was saddened in its tones.

Its effect upon the chief was extraordinary; and although he did not raise his eyes, nor move, his heart beat wildly, and the veins upon his temple leaped to her touch. Yet, with a strong effort, desirous of knowing more of his mysterious visitor, and wondering at the strange effect of her voice upon him, he remained apparently asleep.

Still retaining her hand upon his temple, she continued:

"His sleep is yet unquiet. Our blessed Savior grant him life for repentance!" she added, fervently.

"She knows me!" thought he. "Strange, that she should take such interest in me, then. Those silvery accents! Where have I heard them before! Why do they move me! I must solve this mystery."

"I thank thee, sweet Mother of Heaven, for this favor!" she continued; "I may yet be the instrument in thy hands for good to this wanderer! Forgive me, Holy Mary! I thought I had bid adieu to all worldly emotion—and yet

I should have betrayed my feelings to all around me in the hall, when I recognized his features, so like his father's, had I not hastened to my cell to give vent to my feelings in tears. Sinful! sinful, I have been! Alas, resentment and pity have been struggling the past hour within this bosom, that should have been dead to all earthly excitement. Pity me, Heaven! I will err no more! What a history of buried recollections has the sight of him revived! I thought I had shut out the world forever; but no, not with him before me, I live again in it! Its scenes are present with me; and when I gaze on this working brow—these features, which many years have changed, but whose familiar expression still lives—how can I be all at once, the calm, unimpassioned nun! I know I am sinning to speak and feel thus! Pity my weakness, Mary! Thou hast been human, and a woman! Thou canst sympathize with—but, oh! censure me not! Indulge me in this moment of human failing, and I will give back my whole heart and soul to thee!"

As she spoke, she lifted her angelic countenance upward, clasped the cross she wore, and pressed it to her lips.

At this moment Lafitte opened his eyes, and, while every word she uttered glowed in his bosom like a pleasant memory of half-forgotten things—of mingled bliss and woe—he for the first time had a glimpse of her features.

"Great God! Gertrude!" he exclaimed, springing from the couch and clasping her uplifted hands in his own. "Gertrude, speak! Is it you—my cousin?"

"It is, Achille. Gertrude, and none other," she said, while the rich blood mounted to her pale cheeks at the sudden movement and ardent manner of her cousin.

"Can I believe it?" he said, gazing fixedly upon her, while he still held her hands. "Yet, still it must be—and why here in this garb? Were you not the bride of—"

"Of Heaven alone, cousin," she said, interrupting his impetuous interrogations.

"Where then is—but how came you here? Alas! I know—I know it all—all!" he added bitterly, striking his forehead with his clinched hand and falling back upon the pillow, as she covered her pale face with her hands in tearful silence. "I know all. This hand has made you thus!" and burying his face in the curtain of his couch, his chest heaved, and he sobbed audibly.

Gertrude was deeply affected by his emotion. The discovery of her cousin among the wounded had broken up a life of repose which she had chosen after his crime and flight. Even when giving preference to his brother, who had won her by those gentle means which, rather than passionate appeals—when the female heart is the prize—assure victory, there existed in her bosom a partiality for, or rather friendly feeling toward Achille, his own impetuosity of character rendered him incapable of profiting by. He desired to be loved at once, and for himself, scorning to seek by assiduous attention smiles and favors which could not become his own at the mere expression of his wish to possess them.

In love, as well as in other pursuits which engage men, it is labor which must ever conquer. To the contempt by the one, and the adoption by the other, of this maxim, in relation to a young heart as yet neutral in its partialities, is, perhaps, to be attributed the success of Henri and the failure of Achille.

"Calm your emotion, cousin; I forgive you all that, through Heaven, you have caused me to suffer," she said, taking his unresisting hand.

Lafitte spoke not, and for a few moments seemed to be suffering under the acutest mental torments.

"You have—indeed you have—my forgiveness!" she repeated with earnestness; "but it is not to me you must look for forgiveness, Achille. It is not me you have injured or sinned against."

"My brother; my poor—poor brother!"

"Not Henri alone. Heaven," she said, with fervor, "awaits your contrition and repentance, Achille."

"Heaven!" he repeated, as if he knew not that he spoke aloud. "I know it. I do repent and sue its mercy. But my brother—my innocent, murdered brother!" he interrogated, rising and grasping her arm.

"Nay, Achille, you are not so guilty in act as you imagine. Henri survived the wound."

"Survives! Henri lives! Lives, did you say? Speak, tell me quickly! Oh, heavenly tidings! Angel of mercy! Speak, tell me—tell me my brother lives!" he reiterated, with almost insane animation; while a strange fire filled his eyes as, sitting upright with both hands grasping her shoulders, he wildly fixed them upon her face.

"Say that he lives! that he *lives!* LIVES!" he shouted, with increasing energy in the tones of his voice.

"He does, Achille; calm yourself, he lives, and you may yet meet him."

"Oh! God—lives—meet again!" he faintly articulated. "Oh! I could die, with those sweet words dwelling on my ear!"

"He recovered, and went to France," she

said, after a few moments' mutual silence, "the day after my arrival in this city to seclude myself, the ill-fated cause of all your quarrel, forever from the world."

"Heaven is good—too kind! You say he died not?" he hastily inquired, as if still incredulous. "Oh, speak it again!—once more let me hear the sweet assurance."

"He died not by your hand?"

"It is enough, *enough!*" he said, and sunk back like a child, overpowered and weakened as he still was, by the strong excitement through which he had passed.

In a few moments he resumed his self-possession, and addressed Gertrude more calmly.

"Where went he, cousin?"

"To France. Since then, shut out from the world, I have sought to forget him, and have not heard from him."

"Why married you him not?"

"As an atonement—the only one I could make for the mischief of which I was the unintentional cause—I renounced all worldly hopes, and became the bride of the church."

"And I have made you thus!" he said sadly; "but I thank you, thank you for these tidings. This is too much happiness for me! I will seek my brother out, and at his feet atone for the wrongs I have done him. Poor, gentle boy! I loved him, Gertrude, and would not have slain him.—No, no!" he added, quickly, laughing wildly—"ha! ha! ha!—You tell me he did not die—that *he lives!* God of heaven! I thank thee! I am not my brother's murderer!"

With his spirit subdued, and his heart full of gratitude, he hid his face in the folds of his cousin's mantilla, and wept aloud.

She would not interrupt him, but silently knelt beside his couch, and with all the devotion of a woman's piety, put up a prayer to heaven, for the spiritual welfare of the softened being before her. With holy fervor, like a seraph supplicating, she sought pardon for his errors, and prayed that the spirit of penitence would embrace that moment to act upon his heart, and renew him with a right spirit. Every word of the lovely and devout petitioner fell soothingly, like the pleading of an angel, upon his soul, and before she concluded her holy petition, his heart was melted, and with the quiet humility of a child, he joined his voice with hers, in responding "Amen!"

Gertrude then rose from her kneeling posture, and taking the hand of her cousin, said, with as calm a manner as she could assume:

"Cousin, I must leave you now. I have too long held stolen intercourse with you; but Heaven, I hope, will forgive me if I have erred. We must now part. You leave our convent tomorrow, and from this time we meet no more—till—we meet, I hope, in heaven!" and her soft blue eyes beamed with celestial intelligence, as she raised them to her future home.

"God forbid we should part thus! Gertrude! cousin! bid not adieu! leave me not. Oh, God! how lonely and utterly lost I shall be without you!"

"Nay, cousin, I cannot stay; I must go!" she added firmly—"I must go now! May God, who is ever ready to meet the returning penitent, forgive your past life, and guide you in the new path you have chosen, and for which you have already shed your blood."

"You know me and my life, then?" he inquired eagerly.

"I know you now, as my cousin Achille, a reclaimed, penitent son of the church. You have borne a name I wish not to utter!"

"Lafitte?"

"The same," she replied, mournfully.

"Why, then, cared you for me?"

"That I might do you good."

"No one in the convent has recognized or idly ified me as Lafitte; how did you?"

"The youth—"

"Theodore?"

"That is his name, I believe. He has told me all."

"And yet, you can come and see, and talk with me! Ah! kind, good Gertrude! how much I have injured you! and yet you can forget and forgive it all. Sweet woman! thou art indeed an angel!"

"Now, farewell, Achille. Christianity teaches us both to forgive and forget," she said, with humility. "It is our religion, not me, you should admire. Farewell! We will meet in heaven!"

"Oh! go not yet—stay but for a moment!" he said, rising, and following her. "May I not see you again?"

"Not on earth, Achille. I am betrothed to Heaven!" she said, with dignity united with humility, in her voice and manner.

Lafitte held her hand for a moment in silence, while his features were agitated by many conflicting emotions.

Suddenly he spoke, and said with energy:

"Gertrude! listen to me! this interview has decided my fate. I have wronged you, and I would cheerfully lay down my life to atone for it; but with the will of heaven, I will work out a more befitting expiation. My brother—thank God, he lives—I have injured deeply! I will seek him out, if he is yet a living man, and obtain his forgiveness. Then, having made resti-

tution to those I have wronged, as far as lies in my power, I will devote the remainder of my life to penance and prayer. Oh! I have sinned—grievously sinned!”

“Yet there is pardon for the guiltiest, cousin!” she replied, with timid firmness.

“I know it—it is in that I trust,” he answered, with animation.

“May the blessed Virgin grant you life to accomplish your holy purposes,” she said, while her face glowed with devotion. “Achille—cousin! I must now bid you farewell.”

“But, the old man, my father?” inquired he, with sudden eagerness, as memory, though slowly, faithful to her task, brought up the past scenes of his early life—

“Lives he?”

The heavy gate in front of the convent at that moment opened, with a startling sound, and she replied, hastily:

“I know not, Achille. Your father—my beloved uncle, and Henri, after accompanying me to this city, departed the next day for France. From neither have I since heard. He did speak of leaving Henri in France and visiting his estate near Martinique. He may now reside there. Oh! what a tide of feeling—of sorrow!” she said, while her voice trembled with emotion, “sorrow long sealed up in my heart, have you called forth! I must be more than human not to feel! God and heaven bless you! Farewell!”

Once more pressing his hand, while tears told that nature would hold her empire even within the walls and cloisters of a convent, she hastily glided to the furthest extremity of the hall, and swiftly ascending the winding staircase dimly lighted by a lamp, disappeared from his eager gaze.

His first impulse was to pursue her, although his purpose he himself could not have defined. This determination he however abandoned, as he heard the tramp of men, bearing a litter up the avenue. When they entered the hall he had resumed his recumbent posture on the couch, where wakeful, and his brain teeming with busy thoughts, he passed in deep melancholy the remainder of the night.

CHAPTER V. A SORCERER.

THE events connected with our romance, naturally divide themselves into several distinct parts. Pursuing this division, we now take up our thread at the time of the escape of the Count D'Oyley and Constanza from Lafitte and account for the desperate determination of the Frenchman to slay the chief.

After his escape with Constanza, from the rendezvous of the buccaneers, he was taken on board of his own frigate, *Le Sultan*. On gaining the deck, he hastily replied to the numerous questions addressed to him by his astonished officers. Informing them of his capture, he issued orders for proceeding directly to the cavern, and demolishing this rendezvous of the pirates, by spiking their guns, and otherwise rendering it untenable as a fortified place.

The evening of that day the frigate sailed with majestic motion into the Bay of Gonzaves. The flag of France waved over her quarter deck, and a long tier of guns bristled from each side. Her course was directly for the narrow pass between the two parallel ridges of rocks, which formed a communication from the sea, with the pirate's grotto. A few minutes before sundown she anchored in deep water, within a few fathoms of the outermost rock terminating this passage.

The setting sun flung his beams across the level waters of the bay, and the winds were dying away with the fading of the daylight, as Constanza—the crimson rays tinging her brow with a rich glow—leaned from the cabin window, and with a thoughtful countenance, gazed on the evening sky, with its purple palaces of clouds, its winged creatures, and its mountains of gold and emerald. Her dreams—for although her eyes were fixed upon the gorgeous west, she was wrapped in a dreamy reverie of the past—were of her happy childhood—her paternal home near the imperial city of Montezuma—her aged father—his sudden death, and all the various scenes through which she had passed. The character of Lafitte—his crimes and his virtues—the kindness and noble nature of Theodore—her capture and escape, all floated through her mind, invested with their peculiar associations.

“And am I at last happy?” she said, half-inquiringly. “Oh! that my poor father were here to share my happiness! Can it be true that this is not a dream? Am I indeed free, and is D'Oyley indeed here?”

“Here! my sweet Constanza, and folding you in his arms,” said the count, who had entered the state-room unperceived—“here! to make you happy, and terminate your sufferings.”

Constanza leaned her cheek upon his shoulder and with one arm encircling his neck, looked up into his face with the artless confidence of a child, while her features became radiant with joy. But she spoke not—her happiness was too great for utterance. A few moments he lingered in her pure embrace, and then breathed into her ear:

“When, dearest one, shall D'Oyley become your protector? Tell me now, while I hold you thus!” and he clasped her closer to his heart.

She made no reply, and the rich blood mantled her brow, rivaling the crimson sun-glow which delicately suffused it. Her lips at length moved inaudibly, and her lover felt the small hand be held tremble like an imprisoned dove within his own.

“Say, Constanza, my love! This evening may it be? Shall not the chaplain of the frigate unite us this very hour? Refuse me not this request!” he continued, ardently.

She pressed his hand and looked up into his face, her large black eyes full of confidence and love, whose eloquent expression spoke a deeper and more befitting language than words could convey.

“Bless you, my sweet angel!” he exclaimed, reading with a lover's skill the language of her speaking eyes; and their lips were united in that first kiss of love, whose raptures to mortals, wedded or betrothed—if minstrels tell us truly—is never known but once.

The count ascended to the deck to complete the preparations for his expedition against the rock. From his knowledge of the pass, and means of access to the cave, he determined to conduct the expedition himself.

It was his intention merely to proceed to the cavern, and leaving his men under the command of one of his lieutenants, return to the frigate and be united to the fair maiden, whom from her childhood, when he first beheld her, the pride of her father's eye and the idol of his household, he had admired. In after years, when the Castilian became an exile, he sought him out in his retired villa in Jamaica. But a few weeks only before it was attacked by the pirates he had renewed that admiration, which a few days beneath the same roof with the object of it, ripened into love. He left her for the purpose of cruising a few days in the neighborhood of Carthage, to return and find the villa a scene of desolation, the venerable parent lying a corpse in his house, which was filled with armed soldiery, and the daughter, his beloved Constanza, carried off, no one could tell whither, by the buccaneer.

Now, their scenes of danger and trial passed, he hoped forever, he was to fold her to his heart, his bride! This hope filled his bosom with ecstasy, as with an elastic step and joyous eye he ascended to the deck.

The boats were already alongside and manned. Delaying a moment to repeat his instructions to the chaplain in relation to the approaching ceremony and commending Constanza to the attention of young Montville, he entered the cabin once more, to embrace and assure her of his speedy return.

“Why must you go, dearest D'Oyley?” she inquired, pleadingly; “I cannot trust you in that fearful cave again.”

“I shall not stay, my love. I alone can conduct this expedition, which the safety of these seas renders it necessary should be undertaken.”

“But you will quickly return?” she inquired, detaining him.

“Before Venus, hovering in the rosy west,” he said, pointing to that planet, shining low in the western sky like a lesser moon, “shall wet her slipper in the sea, will I return to you.”

The next moment he was standing in the stern of the boat, which, propelled by twelve oars, moved steadily and swiftly up the rocky passage to the cave.

About a quarter of a mile to the south of the grotto occupied by the buccaneers, a narrow tongue of land extended from the cliff, strewn with loose rocks. Connected by rocks and sand-bars, with one of the parallel ridges confining the passage from the sea to the cave, it formed the southern and eastern boundary of the basin or lagoon, often before mentioned. Near its junction with the rocks of the pass, it was flat and covered with long grass. It was buried at noonday in shadow cast by the rocks which overhung it on every side but that opening to the beach. In this direction the sea was visible through a narrow gap, a few yards in breadth.

In the back part of this area, whose surface was rather less than an acre, and hid by a projecting rock forming its roof, stood a rude hut, constructed of cane branches and bamboo leaves skillfully interwoven. A door facing the sea, was the only aperture in the rude habitation, which a wreath of blue smoke curling up its face indicated it to be. The setting sun reddened with his beams the hideous features of a decrepit hag, with a sunken eye full of malignity, toothless jaws, grizzly wool, long and tangled, and a squalid figure bent nearly double with age and infirmity. Her name Oula, and the rude hut, her habitation.

She was an aged African sibyl, a degenerate priestess of the terrible deity, Fetish, or the Obeah. Through her incantations, charms, amulets, and prophecies, besides her skill in foretelling evil tidings, and her accuracy in giving the fortunes of her deluded votaries, who usually were of her own hue, her name had become widely extended.

Occasionally some one of a paler complexion, from among the buccaneers, resorted to her

grotto, and honored her art by seeking of her knowledge of their future destinies.

Squatted in the door of the hut, her eye was fixed upon the advancing frigate, although she watched its approach with apparent indifference. But when the ship, lessening her sail, finally dropped her anchor within a third of a mile of her wild abode, her features gave indication of interest.

“Quacha!” she called in a harsh voice, as the ship swung to her anchor.

At the sound of her voice, a deformed negro emerged from the cabin, and stood before her. His size indicated extreme youth, but his large features and the lines of sagacity and cunning drawn in his face, showed that he had seen many years, perhaps one-third of the number his mother, for in this relation she stood to him, herself counted. His head was large, and covered with straight, shaggy hair, which fell in thick masses over his eyes. It was the head of an adult, placed upon the shriveled body of a sickly child.

“Hoh, mummy!” he replied, coming forth from the hut where he had been lying, with his head among the ashes, with which he had been cooking their evening meal.

“Did you sa' dat Spanis' Martinez come down in boat' day, hugh?” she inquired, without turning her head.

“Ees, ol' mum.”

“W'at I tell'ee 'bout nebber call me ol', you debble's brat,” she said, in a loud, angry voice, aiming a blow at his head with a long staff she held in her hand, which, from much practice, he dexterously evaded; and then improving his phraseology, replied:

“Ees, mummy.”

“W'at he come for, Quacha?”

“Quacha don't know, mummy. He sa' he come see de ol' Obi.”

“Ol' Obi 'g'in? he say dat?” she asked, muttering; “I'll ol' Obi him wit' his black Spanis' fas.”

“Hoh! here he comes hese'f, mummy,” exclaimed the hope and promise of the old beldam; and the athletic, firm-molded figure of the young Spaniard emerged from the path, which, winding among the rocks, led to the mainland, and he at once stood before them.

“Good-even' to you, Oula,” he said, with an air in which superstitious reverence struggled with incredulity and an inclination to jest with the mysterious being whose supernatural aid he sought.

“Oula is't, an' good-e'en,” she growled. “Well, that's better nor ol' Obi,” she added, without turning her eyes from the frigate. “You needn't s'pose anything is hid from Oula. W'at for is she Obi, if not to know ebery'ing?” “Now be at peace, Oula, and harm me not with Obeah,” he said, soothingly. “I meant not to anger you. Listen! do you know the music of this gold?” he asked, shaking several gold-pieces in his hand—“I have brought it to give you, Oula.”

The eyes of the negress sparkled as she stretched forth her bony arm to grasp the coin, which he resigned to her greedy clutch.

“W'at want for dese, Martinez? S'all Oula Obi you'en'my, show you de prize-ship, or find de white breast buckra missy for you?” she said, slowly and carefully counting the money from one hand into the other.

The Spaniard approached her, and said, with emphasis: “The last, Oula! Serve me, and you shall have five times the coin you clasp so tightly there.”

“Come in, come in, Martinez,” said she, rising upon her staff and hobbling into the hut. Obi can do nothin' wid de fire-stars looking so bright.”

With a paler brow and a faltering step, he entered the gloomy hut, half-filled with smoke, and hot and filthy from the fumes of tobacco and other nauseous herbs drying in the chimney, which was rudely constructed of loose stones.

Closing the door, after commanding Quacha to stay without and watch against intrusion, she pointed Martinez to a seat upon a fragment of rock, and bidding him turn his back and observe the strictest silence till she spoke, commenced her mysterious preparations.

Baring her shriveled arms and scraggy neck, she passed her fingers through her tangled hair till it stood out from her head like the quills of a porcupine. Then taking from a box by the fire-place a tiara, or head-dress, made of innumerable stuffed water-snakes, curiously interwoven, so that their heads were all turned outward, exhibiting to the eye of her credulous devotee a formidable and terrific coronet, she placed it upon her disbeveled locks, appearing a second Medusa.

From the same repository in which were contained her materials for practicing Obeah, she drew forth a necklace, strung with the claws and teeth of cats, the fangs of serpents and the teeth of hanged men, which, with great solemnity of manner, she passed three times around her neck. To this she suspended a little red bag, filled with grave-dirt and tied up with the hair of a murdered woman. Bracelets of similar materials as the necklace, with the addition to each of the beak of a parrot which had been

taught to speak the three magic names of Fetish, ornamented her arms. Encircling her waist with an enormous green and black serpent, she tied it by the head and tail, leaving them to dangle before her.

Then oiling her face, arms, neck and breast, she dipped her finger into a basin of water which stood upon the box, muttering, meanwhile, words unintelligible to the Spaniard. Taking an iron pot, she placed it, with great solemnity, in the back part of the hut, leaving only sufficient room to pass between it and the wall.

These preparations completed with great show of ceremony, she took from a branch a human bone, and stirred the fire with its charred end. Laying this aside, she took from the same place a skeleton hand, the joints retained in their places by wires, with which she took up a live coal and placed it under the pot. After several coals were transferred from the fireplace in this manner, she got upon her knees before the fire she had thus collected under the pot, and began to blow it until it blazed.

Then rising and hobbling to the fireplace, she slipped a slide, which had once belonged to a binnacle-case, and reaching her hand into the cavity, drew forth from its roost a snow-white cock, fat and unwieldy from long and careful keeping.

This bird, held sacred in all Obeah rites, the old sorceress placed over the coals, upon a roost constructed of three human bones—two placed upright, and one laid horizontally across them.

These mysterious preparations completed, she walked three times round the caldron, working her features, as she moved, into the most passionate contortions—so that, when she stopped on completing her round, her face was more demoniac than human in its aspect and expression. In a shrill, startling voice, she then addressed her votary:

"Rise, buckra, look; no speak!"

The Spaniard had witnessed, with feelings of dismay which he could not subdue, the ominous preparations we have described, reflected in a broken mirror which he was purposely made to face. Her object in placing her votaries in such a position was that, by the imperfect representation of her rites, the reality might be exaggerated by them, and their fears so acted upon, as better to prepare them for her purpose.

As she spoke, he stood up and turned toward her with a wild look, while his hand involuntarily grasped the hilt of his cutlass. The distorted features of the beldam, and her strange ornaments and appalling preparations, met his superstitious eye. She allowed him to survey the scene before him for a moment, and then commenced chanting in rude improvisatore:

"Now tell, buckra, w'at dat you
Ax of Fetish for you do?
If you b'lieve dat Fetish know
Ebery ting above, below—
Den you hab all dat you seek,
Walk t'ree times roun', den buckra speak."

Seizing his passive hand as she addressed him, she leaped with almost supernatural activity three times around the spot, drawing him after her with reluctant steps, yet fearing to hold back.

The third time she paused, and taking an earthen vessel from the box, she commenced dancing round the fire, commanding him to follow—dropping, as she whirled, something she took from it into the iron vessel, chanting the while, in rude measure:

"Here de unborn baby heart,
Fetish lub dis much!
Here de hair from off de cat
Dat gnaw de nails,
Eat out de eyes,
Dat drink de blood
Ob dead man.
Here de poison for de friend!
Fetish lub dis too!
Here de trouble for de foe!
Here de egg of poison snake—
Here de head ob speckle cock—
Here de blood, and here de dirt
From de coffin, from de grave
Of murdered 'ooman an' her babe."

Then followed some unintelligible incantation, in a language unknown to the Spaniard, and still grasping both his hands, she danced with him around the caldron.

Suddenly stopping, after many rapid revolutions, during which her body writhed in convulsions, while the astonished and paralyzed victim of his own superstition yielded passively to the strange rites in which he was now an unwilling actor, she renewed her monotonous chant, in the same wild and shrill tone of voice.

"Now de blood from near de heart
Perfect make de Obeah art;
Buckra's wish will den be grant,
An' Fetish gib him dat he want."

"What mean you, Oula?" he inquired, as the Obeah priestess drew a long knife from her girdle, and held the earthen vessel in the other hand.

She replied, while her eyes darkened with malignity, and her features grew more baggy and hideous:

After buckra tell his wish,
Den his blood mus' fill dis dish;
Middle finger—middle vein,
Blood from dat will gib no pain—
In de kettle it shall mix,
Wid hangman's bones for stirring sticks!
Now, buckra Spaniard, w'at's dy will?
Speak! dy wis' to Oula tell."

As she concluded, she fixed her eyes, before whose strange expression his own quailed, full upon her votary.

The Spaniard who had visited her in full belief of her supernatural powers, to solicit her aid in the accomplishment of his object, was wholly unprepared for the scenes—of magnitude, to one of his tone and mind—through which he had passed. It was several moments before he recovered his self-possession, and then an impulse to withdraw his application, rather than pursue his object, influenced him. But after a moment's reflection, and recollecting the object he had in view, he summoned resolution, and replied with a hoarse voice, looking about him the while suspiciously, as if fearful of being overheard.

"Oula, there is a maiden beautiful as the moon! I love her! But she would scorn me if I wooed her, and she is, moreover, betrothed to another. He was my prisoner. I brought him to this island and confined him to await our captain's arrival. The next day, before my vessel sailed again, she also was brought in a captive. I bribed my captain and lingered behind in disguise, that I might see her, of whom I had heard so much. I at length had a glimpse of her from the opening in the top of the cave, and when I saw her—I loved her."

"Loved her to marry, Martinez?" she said, with an ironical grin.

"I said not so," replied the Spaniard, quickly.

"I loved her with a burning passion. I sought to gain the part of the grotto she occupied, and arranged my plan; but Lafitte returned. The next day I would have effected it, but last night they escaped, she and her lover, and I have all the day been planning some way to obtain her. This evening as I was sitting by the cave cursing my fate and thinking perhaps I should never see her more—yonder frigate hove in sight. I took a glass and watched her until she dropped her anchor—and whom think you I saw upon her deck?"

"The buckra lady?"

"The same—I knew her by her form and air. She leaned upon the arm of my late prisoner, who is, no doubt, commander of the ship."

"What do you want done?" she inquired, as he abruptly paused.

"I would possess her!" he replied warmly. "Now, Oula, fulfill your boasted promise," he added eagerly, as his dark eye flashed with hope and passion.

"It hard business! But Fetish he do ebery ting! You b'lieve dat, buckra Martinez?" she added, fixing her bloodshot and suspicious eye upon him.

"All, everything, only give me power to accomplish my desires," he exclaimed, impatiently.

"Dat you s'all hab," she replied, seizing his arm; "hol' you lef' arm—dat next de heart's blood," she cried; and then chanted in her usual strain:

"Blood from heart,
Firs' mus' part,
Fore Fetish
Grant you' wish."

With revolting gestures, and brandishing her glistening knife, she danced around him; then fastening her long fingers upon his hand, she continued:

"From middle finger—middle vein,
Blood must flow, you' end to gain."

When the Spaniard, after a struggle between apprehension for his own safety, and fear in failing in his object, had made up his mind to go through the ordeal, although resolved to watch her so that she should inflict no severe wound upon his hand, the voice of the beldam's son was heard at the door in altercation with some one in the possession of a voice no less discordant than his own.

The Obeah, surprised in the middle of her orgies, in a shrill angry tone, demanded the cause of this interruption.

"It Cudjoe, mummy—he want see ol' Obi, he sa'."

"Maldicho!" exclaimed the Spaniard. "it were as much as my head is worth for Lafitte's slave to find me here, when I should be at sea. Is there no outlet?" he inquired hastily.

"No—but here be de deep hole," she said, removing some branches and old clothing—"dis will hide you. He must come in, or he br'ak in," she added, as Cudjoe's anxiety to enter grew more obvious by his loud demand for admittance, and his repeated blows against the door.

The Spaniard, not in a situation to choose his place of concealment, let himself down in the hole, which formed her larder and store-room, and was immediately covered over with branches and blankets.

"What for such racket, you Coromantee nigger—break in lone 'ooman's house after dark?" she grumbled with much displeasure;

and taking a lighted brand in her hand, she unbarred the frail door.

At the sight of her strange attire, and wild appearance, increased by the flame of the burning brand she held, alternately flashing redly upon her person, and leaving it in obscurity, the slave drew back with an exclamation of terror. The sorceress, who believed she possessed the power for which the credulous gave her credit—having deceived others so long, that she ultimately deceived herself—enjoyed his surprise, feeling it a compliment to her art and received character, as one of the terrible priestesses of Fetish.

"Hugh! Coromantee," she said, "if you start dat way at Oula, w'at t'inkee you do, you see Fetish? What you want dis time?" she inquired abruptly. "What for you no wid you' massa, Lafitte?"

"Him sail away after de prisoners dat get 'way las' night and leave Cudjoe 'sleep in de cave like a col' dead nigger, and he know nottin' 'bout it."

"Gi' me! well, what for you come 'sturb Oula—you 'fraid she Obi you?"

"Oh Gar Almighty, good Oula, nigger! don't put de finger on me. Cudjoe come for Obi," cried the slave, in alarm.

"Obi can do nottin' widout music ob de gold," she said, mechanically extending her hand.

"Cudjoe know dat well 'nuff," he replied, taking several coins of copper, silver, and gold, from the profound depths of his pocket, in which almost every article of small size missing in the vessel in which he sailed, always found a snug berth.

He gave her the money, which she counted with an air somewhat less satisfied than that she wore when telling the weightier coin of the Spaniard, and then invited him into her hut.

Casting his eyes about the gloomy apartment with awe, he at last rested his gaze upon the white cock, which still reposed upon his roost of human bones. Gradually, as he looked, and became more familiar with the gloom of the interior, his eyes dilated with superstitious fear, and without removing them from the sacred bird, sunk first on one knee and then on the other, the while rapidly repeating some heathenish form of adjuration, and at length fell prostrate, with his face to the damp earth.

For a moment he remained in this attitude of worship, in which fear predominated over devotion, when the voice of Oula aroused him.

"Dat good—Obeah like dat. Now what you want, Cudjoe? Be quick wid you' word, 'coz I hab much bus'ness to do jus' dis time."

"Cudjoe want revenge ob hell!" he replied, rising to his knees, his features at once changing to a fiendish expression, in faithful keeping with his wish.

"Bon Giu! Who harm you now, Coromantee?" she inquired, in a tone of sympathy, gratified at meeting a spirit and feelings kindred with her own.

"Debble! Who?" he said fiercely, "more buckras dan de fingers on dese two han'!"

"What, deir name?" she inquired. "Obeah mus' know de name."

Here the slave, who never forgave an insult elicited by his personal deformities, recapitulated the injuries he imagined he had suffered from this cause. She gave a willing ear to his recital, forgetting in her participation with his feelings, her first visitor, who impatiently awaited the termination of this interview. As he heard his own name in the catalogue of vengeance repeated by the slave, he muttered within his teeth, that he should rue the hour he sought the Obeah's skill.

"Gi' me!" she exclaimed, as he ended. "All dese you want hab me gib Obi! Hugh! what nice picking for de jonny crows dey make. But dere mus' be more gold. Hough! hoh! hoh!" she laughed, or rather croaked. "Gah me! what plenty dead men! Well, you be de good cos'omer, if you be de Coromantee nigger!"

"Will de Obi beset for dem all?" he impatiently inquired.

"Dere mus' be two t'ree t'ings done fus'; you mus' take de Fetish in de fus' place," she said, bringing from her box an ebony idol carved into many grotesque variations of the human form. "Here is de great Fetish," she continued; "now put your right hand on de head of dis white bird, while I hol' de Fetish to your lips. Dere," she continued as he tremblingly assumed the required position and manner, "dere, now swear you b'lieve w'at I speak—"

"Fetish he be black—deb'l he be white,
Sun he make for nigger—for buckras mak' de night."

"Cudjoe b'lieve it every bit," he eagerly replied.

"Now kiss de Fetish," she said, as he repeated after her the form of an Obeah oath, administered only to those of her own race and religion.

One or two other similar ceremonies were performed, when she suddenly exclaimed: "Dere I hab it! How de debble no t'ink sooner!"

"Coromantee," she said, abruptly, "dere is one t'ing more must be done, or Fetish do nottin', and Obeah no be good."

The slave looked at her inquiringly, and she continued:

"Dere mus' be de blood from de heart of a white breas' lady, to dip de wing ob de white bird in. You mus' get de lady; she mus' be young, hab black eyes, an' neber hab de husban'. Do dis, an' you s'all hab you' wish."

The slave's countenance fell as he heard the announcement suggested by her practiced subtlety.

"Dere was a white lady," he replied, "in de schooner, but she gone. Oh, gar! it take debble time to do dis," he said, with an air of disappointment. "Mus' de great Fetisha hab one?" he inquired, anxiously.

"He mus'. He do nottin' widout," she replied, determinedly.

The slave stood lamenting the loss of his anticipated revenge, when she inquired if he saw the frigate that dropped her anchor half an hour before off the pass. On his replying in the affirmative, she said:

"Dere is a lady board dat ship may serve de purpose. As de ship was swung roun' I seen her in de window on de stern."

The eyes of the slave lighted up at this intelligence.

"W'at frigate is dat, Oula?"

"I don't know," she replied, fearing if the slave knew the lady to be the Castilian his master had protected, he would decline the enterprise upon which she was about sending him.

"No matter 'bout de ship," she replied. "De lady be dere; de stern lie close to de rocks. You can go out to de end of de passage an den swim under de stern, climb up de rudder or some way into de window, an' take her off before dey can catch you in de dark. You hear dis! Now w'at you say?"

Without replying the slave darted through the door, and before the old woman could gain the outside, to warn him to be cautious, his retreating form, as he ran rapidly along the rocks in the direction of the frigate, was lost to her eye.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SLAVE AND HIS CAPTIVE.

AFTER the count left the frigate on his expedition against the rendezvous of the pirates, the fair girl, whose star of happiness seemed now in the ascendant, and about to shine propitiously upon her future life, reassumed her reclining attitude by the cabin window, which overlooked the sea in the direction of her native land.

For a few moments her thoughts were engaged upon her approaching bridal; but gradually, they assumed the garb of memory, and, like a wearied bird, winging over the evening sea, reposed in the home of her childhood. As she gazed vacantly upon the fading horizon, she was conscious that a dark object intervened between her and its even line. It grew larger, and rapidly approached the frigate before she was aroused from her half-conscious abstraction, by a change in its appearance; when, looking more keenly in the direction, she saw it was a three-masted schooner in the act of rounding to, about a mile beyond the frigate. Apparently, it had not yet been observed from the deck, as all eyes were turned toward the shore, following the boats which had just gained the base of the cliff.

At the sight of the vessel, so nearly resembling the one whose prisoner she had been, her capture and its trying scenes came vividly before her mind, and she turned her face from an object, connected with such disagreeable associations. The approaching ceremony again agitated her bosom; and as her eye rested upon a mirror in the opposite panel, she parted with care her dark hair from her forehead, arranged in more graceful folds her mantilla, and all the woman beamed in her fine eyes as they met the reflection of her lovely countenance and symmetrically-molded figure.

"How long he stays! He must have been gone full an hour," she said unconsciously, aloud. "The Virgin protect him from harm!"

"The count will soon return, ma'moiselle," said a small mulatto boy, who acted as steward of the state-rooms, now that they were occupied by their fair inmate. She turned as he spoke.

"Is there danger, boy?"

"None, please you, ma'moiselle. The men on deck say the rovers have left their rock, and that there will be no fighting."

"*Sacre diable!*" he suddenly shrieked, pointing to the state-room window, in which appeared the head of the slave. Constanza also turned, but only to be grasped in his frightful arms. He prevented her from giving the alarm by winding her mantilla about her mouth, and then hastily conveyed her through the window or port-hole, from which the gun, usually stationed there, had been removed. Rapidly letting himself, with his burden, down by the projections of the rudder, he dropped with her into the sea, and raising her head above water with one of his muscular arms, a few vigorous strokes with the other bore him within the shadow of the rocks, behind a projecting point of which he disappeared.

Re-entering the hut after the departure of Cudjoe, Oula released the Spaniard from his place of concealment, and informed him of her plan to place the lady in his power.

"You are a very devil for happy thoughts," he said, with animation; "but if the revengeful slave gets her, I may thank you, and not Fetish, for the prize. Have her this night I must, for I expect my schooner."

"Hail there is my vessel now, by the holy twelve!" he exclaimed, as his quick eye rested upon the object which had attracted the attention of Constanza. "Getzendanner will be putting a boat in for me, and yet he must see the frigate, unless she lays too dark in the cliff's shadow. St. Peter, send fortune with the slave! Will he bring her to the hut if he succeeds, think you, Oula?" he suddenly and sharply inquired, as a suspicion of the possibility of a change in the negro's purpose flashed across his mind.

"Bring de lady?" she exclaimed in surprise. "He know he finger rot off, he eye fall out, and he hair turn to de live snake wid de fang, if he no bring her. He no dare keep her away!"

Solaced by this assurance, he paced the green plot before the cabin, often casting his eyes in the direction of the frigate. Nearly half an hour elapsed after the departure of Cudjoe when the robes of the maiden, borne in the arms of the slave, caught his eye.

"Back, back! you spoil de whole!" exclaimed Oula, as the impatient Spaniard darted forward to seize his prize.

Instead of Constanza's lovely form, he met the herculean shoulders of the slave, whose long knife passed directly through his heart. Without a word or a groan, he fell dead at his feet.

Resigning the maiden to the faithful Juana, who followed immediately behind, Cudjoe sprung over the body with a cry of vindictive rage, and before Oula could comprehend his motives, the reeking blade passed through her withered bosom.

"Take dis, hag ob hell!" he shouted, as he drew forth the knife from her breast. "You make no more fool ob Cudjoe for de curs' Spaniard!"

"*Grande diable!* what debble dis?" he suddenly yelled, as the son of the slain Obeah, when he saw his mother fall, leaped upon his neck, grappled his throat tightly with his fingers, and fixed his teeth deeply into his flesh. The struggle between them was but for a moment. Finding it impossible to release himself from his fiendish embrace, the slave bent his arm backward, and passed his long knife up through his body. The thrust was skillful, and fatal to the boy, who released his grasp, and fell back in the agonies of death, to the ground.

In the mean while, Juana had borne Constanza to the fire, in the hut, and was employing every means to restore circulation to the chilled limbs of the unconscious girl.

The interview between the Spaniard and Oula had been overheard by Juana from the rock above the hut. After the escape of her mistress and the count, and the departure of Lafitte and his men, in pursuit—with the exception of Cudjoe, who in the hurry and confusion of getting under way, was left behind—she was left quite alone. This solitude, and anxiety on account of her mistress, led her, at the approach of evening, to pay a visit to the old sibyl, for the purpose of consulting her respecting her safety.

After the hasty departure of the slave to obey the commands of Oula, she descended the rock overhanging the hut, and rapidly following him, she awaited his return on the beach, and then communicated to him the information relative to the Spaniard and the lady. Indignant at this treachery toward one whom he regarded as his master's lady, and enraged that the old woman should thus use him as the tool for the Spaniard, he drew his knife, hastened toward the hut, and met Martinez with the fatal result we have just mentioned.

When the slave entered the Obeah cabin, after his bloody revenge was completed, Juana informed him of the expedition against the cave, which she had seen moving toward the rock.

Constanza soon recovered, and Juana led her forth into the air: then saying that she would go round with her to the cave, where the boats of her lover then were, she warned Cudjoe to endeavor to get on board of the schooner and escape from the French seamen. The slave looked seaward, where she could just be discovered lying to, and in a few seconds afterward he saw a boat pulling along close to the shore. Supposing, from the language of the Spaniard, that it was sent for him, and that the schooner was the "Avenger," the name of Getzendanner's vessel, he bid Juana conduct Constanza to the barges of the frigate; and, hastily leaving them, he approached the boat, which now touched the beach.

"Boat aboy!" he hailed, as he came near.

"Ha, Cudjoe! that's your sweet voice, in a thousand," replied one, in answer to his hail. "How came you here?"

"The captain sail and leab me sleep in de cave," he replied. "I must go to Barrata in the Avenger."

"You are right welcome, my beauty. But where's Martinez?"

"He was jus' killed by de Frenchman, in shore. I jus' 'scape wid my neck."

"Frenchman? How?" exclaimed the man, in surprise. "What do you mean?"

"No see dat frigate, dar? I t'ought you bol' 'nuff to com' in right under her gun. See her? Dere she lay. You can hardly tell her masts from de trees."

The man looked for a moment steadily, and then exclaimed:

"By the holy St. Peter, you say truly! Spring into the boat, Cudjoe. Shove off, men—shove off, and give way like devils to your oars! We must be out of this, or we shall have hard quarters between monsieur's decks."

In a few moments they stood on the deck of the schooner, which immediately filled and stood seaward.

Her subsequent career is already known to the reader.

Before Juana reached the cave with her charge, to effect which she had first to ascend the cliff and then descend by a perilous footway to the platform before it, the object of the count had been effected. The gun had been pitched over into the basin, and the arms and stores either destroyed or carried off. When he gained the deck of his frigate, he was met by the first lieutenant.

"Shall we get under way, sir?" he inquired.

"Not yet, monsieur," he replied, smiling.

"We have a festival below, which will require the presence of my officers; and the men, too, must make merry to-night."

Then, winged with love, he hastened to meet Constanza. Entering the state-room, he encountered the prostrate form of the mulatto boy, who was lying insensible by the door.

Glancing his eyes hastily around the apartment, while his heart palpitated with a sudden foreboding of evil, the loved form he sought nowhere met his eager gaze. Alarmed, he called her name, and searched every recess of that and the adjoining state-rooms.

"My God! where can she be?" he exclaimed, now highly excited. "Can she have fallen into the water from this port? Yet, it cannot be. Constanza, my betrothed, my beloved Constanza, speak to me if you are near!" he cried, hoping, yet with trembling, that she might still be concealed—playfully hiding from him to try, as maidens will do, her lover's tenderness. "Yet, what means this?" he added, raising the boy. "There is life here. He has fainted. Speak, Antoine; open your eyes and look at me!"

The boy still remained insensible; but the count, by applying restoratives hastily taken from the toilet of the maiden, soon restored his suspended faculties. To his eager questions, the boy in reply told of the hideous visage that appeared at the port-hole, enlarging upon his black face and white tusks.

"Was it a man or a wild beast?" he interrogated.

"Oh! monsieur, one man-devil—with such long arms, and long white tusks like a boar!" he replied, clinging to the person of the officer, and looking fearfully around, as if expecting the appalling apparition to start momentarily upon his sight.

The brow of the lover changed to the hue of death; the blood left his lips, and faintly articulating, "Lafitte's slave!" he reeled, and would have fallen to the floor, had not the boy caught him. Recovering himself by a vigorous intellectual and physical effort, he stood for an instant in thought, as if revolving upon some mode of action.

At length he spoke, in a voice deep with emotion, and gathering passion:

"Lafitte—thou seared and branded outlaw! As true as there is one living God, I will be avenged for this foul and grievous wrong! But why do I stand here? he is not far off. I may pursue and take him within the hour—and," he added, bounding to the deck, "perhaps recover Constanza, ere it be—too late."

His voice, as he issued his orders to get at once under way, rung with an energy and sternness the startled officers and seamen never knew before. Having rapidly communicated the disappearance of Constanza, he learned from the officer of the watch that some of the men who had joined the shore expedition, said they had seen, on returning, a sail in the cffing.

"But after having swept the whole horizon with my glass," he continued, "and discerning nothing, I concluded that they must have been deceived, and therefore did not report it. Now, I think they were right."

"That vessel was Lafitte's, and Constanza is on board of her," exclaimed the count. "We must pursue, and if there is strength in wind, or speed in ships, overtake and capture her this night. Call the men who saw her."

The seamen being interrogated, indicated by the compass the direction the sail bore from the frigate, when they discovered it. Toward this point, in less than three minutes after the count had ascended to the deck, the ship, leaving her anchor behind her, began to move out of the bay with great velocity, her tall masts bending gracefully to one side, as if they would kiss the waves, the water surging before her bows, and

gurgling with hoarse but lively music around her rudder.

All that night, a night of intense anxiety to the count, a bright watch was kept on every quarter; yet the morning broke without discovering the object of their pursuit. The horizon was unbroken even by a cloud; a calm had fallen upon the sea, and not a wave curled to the zephyrs, which from time to time, scarcely dimpling it, danced over its polished surface.

For several days, within sight of the island, the frigate lay becalmed. At length the count, unable to contend with the fever of his burning thoughts, became delirious. Day and night he raved, and called on the name of Constanza. During this period the frigate cruised along the coast, the officer in command not choosing to take any step until he knew the mind of his superior.

On the twelfth day after the disappearance of Constanza, he was so far recovered as to ascend to the deck. His brow was pale, and his eye brilliant with an unwonted expression.

"Twelve days, Montville—so long? There is no hope—but revenge is left!" and his eyes flashed as his voice swelled with emotion. "Put about for Barrataria!" he added quickly, rising and walking the deck with much agitation. "My only passion, my only purpose now shall be to meet that man—the bane of all my happiness. Destiny bid him cross my path, and destiny shall bid him die by my hand!"

On the third morning, they arrived at the island of Barrataria, prepared to destroy that stronghold of the pirates; but instead of a formidable fleet—a strong fortress and an extensive camp—they found desolation. The day before their arrival, the buccaneers had been dispersed, their vessels captured, and their fort dismantled. Here and there wandered a straggler, ragged and wounded; no boats were visible, and the smoke of two or three burning vessels, with the ruined camp of the pirates, told how recently and completely the revenge of the count had been anticipated.

From a wounded pirate, whom they took prisoner, he learned that Lafitte had recently been at Barrataria, and had now gone to New Orleans to join the American forces in the defense of that city. The count determined to follow him.

Piloted by one of his men acquainted with the inlets and bayous, communicating with the Mississippi, he gave orders to his first lieutenant to await his return, and proceeded at once on his way to the city. On his approach the next morning, the thunder of artillery filled his ears; and burning with revenge, as the sound of firing grew louder and nearer, he urged his oarsmen to their strength.

Entering the Mississippi about two leagues below the city, on the morning of the eighth of January, by a different route from that taken on a former occasion by Lafitte, he crossed to the opposite shore, from which came the roar of cannon, the crash of musketry, and shouts of combatants, while a dense cloud of smoke enveloped the plain to the extent of half a mile along the river.

"On yonder field, face to face, and steel to steel, I will meet him I seek, or—death!" he exclaimed.

Learning from a fisherman the disposition of the two armies, and the point defended by the outlaw, he crossed the river, and after pulling up against the current for a third of a mile, he landed amidst a shower of balls and joined in the battle.

After he had, as he thought, achieved his revenge, in the fall of Lafitte, whose personal combat with him has already been referred to, the count, himself severely wounded, returned to his boat. In a few minutes he grew faint from the loss of blood, and was landed by his crew at a negro's hut on the banks of the river. Here he remained several days, confined to a wretched couch, until his wound enabled him to proceed on his way to his ship.

As he was about to order his boatmen to prepare for their departure, he heard the name of Lafitte mentioned by the hospitable slave who was his host, in conversation with some one outside of the hut.

"What of him?" exclaimed the count.

"Dere him schooner, massa—gwine down de river!"

"What, that light-rigged vessel?" he said, pointing to a small, but beautifully-armed schooner. "No—no—he is slain."

"He was wounded in the battle of the eight, with two of his lieutenants, Sebastiano and a Dutchman—Getzendanner, I believe they call him," said a fisherman, coming forward; "but he is now well, and has purchased that vessel, formerly his own and is going—they say, since he has received his pardon—to spend his days in the West Indies, or in France."

"Ha—say you, monsieur? Was it not him then I met on the field? Yet it must have been," he added mentally. "Know you certainly that he sails away in that schooner?" he eagerly inquired of the man, turning as he spoke, to look at the vessel which with swift and graceful motion, with all her canvas spread, moved down the river, rapidly disappearing in the distance.

"I saw him myself standing upon the deck as she passed," replied the fisherman, decidedly.

"Then he shall not escape me!" cried the count; and calling to his crew, he hastened to his boat, and in a few minutes was on the way to his frigate, resolved, if possible, to intercept the schooner at the Balize.

The following day he reached his ship, and with his heart steeled to the consummation of his revenge, immediately got under way for the mouth of the Mississippi.

CHAPTER VII.

A SURPRISE.

We will leave the count in pursuit of Lafitte, now no longer "the outlaw." He had recovered his favorite vessel, "The Gertrude," which had been captured with the rest of the fleet by the expedition sent against his retreat by the Americans, and with a select crew, drawn from his former adherents, set sail for his rendezvous in the Gulf of Gonzaves, a few days after we left him in the convent, for the purpose of carrying into effect the resolutions he had there made. To the fate of Constanza—whom he left at this rendezvous, with the faithful Juana, on her way to the boats of her lover's frigate—we will now draw the attention of our readers.

When the desolate and unhappy girl found the frigate's boats had left the rock, her heart sunk within her; and when the ship, shortly after, stood seaward, under full sail, she at once surrendered herself to hopeless wretchedness. Three weeks she remained in the grotto, with a kind slave, her only companion, from whom she received every attention that circumstances permitted.

Her mind was daily tortured with fears of the approach of some of the pirate's squadron, or of Lafitte himself, whom, if again thrown into his power, she feared above all. As yet she was ignorant of the scenes he had passed through—the great change in his destiny—the horrible career he had commenced, and his pardon by the executor of the laws he had so long violated. If she had known all this, and known too, that love for herself, united with a noble patriotism, influenced him to take these steps, how different would have been her feelings! With what other emotions than of fear, would she have anticipated his approach!

The moon had shone trembling in the west, like the fragment of a broken ring—had displayed a broad and shining shield—and had nearly faded again into the pale eastern skies, and yet Constanza remained an inmate of the grotto.

Late in the afternoon, three days after we took leave of the count, on his way to intercept the Gertrude at the Balize, Constanza ascended the cliff, above the terrace, to survey, as she had done each long day of her imprisonment, the horizon spread out before her to the south and west, hoping to discover the sails of the frigate, which contained all that bound her to existence.

As night gathered over the sea, she descended the cliff, and walked toward the point where stood the hut of the deceased Obeah. The waves broke at her feet as she walked along the sandy shore. The stars heralded by the evening planet, one by one began to appear, sprinkling a faint light upon her brow, and the night wind played wantonly with her hair; but unmindful of every surrounding object she walked thoughtfully forward, unheeding her footsteps, and unconsciously rambled to the extreme point of the cape. Here seating herself upon a rock, she leaned her head upon her hand, and gazed long upon the sea, while thoughts of her lover and her desolate and unprotected situation, filled her mind. At length she insensibly fell asleep.

About midnight, a hand laid upon her forehead, awoke her. A tall figure stood by her side. With a scream of terror she sprung to her feet, and would have fled; but he detained her by her robes.

"Stay, Constanza, senora! stay! Tell me why you are here?"

"It is Lafitte—the outlaw!" she exclaimed, breathless with alarm.

"It is, lady, Lafitte; but no longer the outlaw!"

"Wretched, miserable, indeed!" she cried with nervous emotion.

"Lady," he replied, moved by her distress. "Lady, there shall no danger approach you while I can protect you. How you came once more in my power, is a mystery to me. I thought you happy as the bride of—"

"No—oh, no! He returned here after we gained his frigate, and your slave stole on board into the port, and seizing me, prevented me from giving the alarm, and brought me on shore to the hut of an old negress. The frigate, on my being missed, stood out to sea, probably after a schooner, which they thought was yours, and on board of which they no doubt thought I was, or they would have searched the shore and cavern. Three weeks I have been here with none but Juana. Even your presence, senor, is a relief to me!"

The chief listened with surprise to this rapid account of her capture.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, the conduct of the count on the field of battle, flashing upon his mind. "I see it all. 'Revenge,' was his war-cry! He must have suspected my agency in this, and pursued me to avenge his wrongs. Thank God! I am herein guiltless. But my slave! Know you whose tool he was, or his purpose, senora?" he quickly inquired.

"I do, senor," she replied; and then related to him the deception practiced upon Cudjoe—of which Juana had informed her—and his instant revenge.

"I knew that Martinez to be a second Herberto Velasquez in villainy," he said. "I congratulate you, lady! Heaven surely watches over you for your good! My slave's vengeance was like himself. Strange, when he arrived in the Avenger at Barrataria a day or two afterward, he told me not of all this. But perhaps he feared for his head."

At this moment a voice startled the maiden, and timid as the hunted fawn from the excitement she had gone through she prepared to fly.

"Stay, lady, it is only my boatmen on the other side of this rock. Passing up the channel to the grotto in the schooner," continued Lafitte, "I saw your white robes, even in this faint starlight, as you were sleeping on the rocks. I immediately let down my boat, and ordering the schooner to keep on into the basin, I landed to ascertain who it was, not dreaming—although my heart should have told me—he added tenderly, "that it was yourself."

"Now, senora," he said, addressing her earnestly, "will you so far put confidence in me, as voluntarily to place yourself under my protection? I need not assure you that it shall be a most honorable one. This very hour I will sail with you to your friends—nay, to the Count D'Oyley himself! If you desire it, I will seek him in every port in the Mexican seas. Confide in me, lady, and allow me to show you the strength of my love for you, while I manifest its disinterestedness."

In less than half an hour, Constanza and Juana—whom she had left in the cave during her absence—were once more occupants of the gorgeously-furnished state-room of the Gertrude. Before morning, Lafitte having completed the business for which he visited his rendezvous, his swift-winged vessel was many leagues from the grotto, almost flying over the waves before a brisk wind, in the direction of Havana, where he expected to hear of, or fall in with, the count's frigate.

From the moment his lovely passenger had entered the cabin, he had not seen or spoken with her. Her young protector, Theodore, again became her page, and Juana her faithful attendant.

From Theodore she learned, with surprise and pleasure, the scenes through which his benefactor had passed since she last met him. With prayerful gratitude she listened to the strange history of the last few weeks he had passed at Barrataria and in the besieged city, of his exploits upon the battle-field, his pardon by the executive, and his resolution to devote his life for the good of his fellow-men, by retiring to the monastery of heroic and benevolent monks, on the summit of Mont St. Bernard.

"May the Virgin and her Son bless and prosper him in his purposes!" she said, raising her eyes with devotional gratitude to Heaven, while all the woman beamed in them, as she reflected how far she had contributed to this change. She sighed, that she could not requite love so noble and pure as his.

With perfect confidence in the sincerity of her captor, she now became more composed, and a ray of joy illumined her heart, when she looked forward to the meeting with her lover.

"And where will you go, my Theodore, when your friend becomes a recluse?"

"Lady, I shall never leave him! Where he goes, I go! He is my only friend on earth. There is none besides to care for the buccaneer boy," he added, with a melancholy air.

"Nay—nay—Theodore. The Count D'Oyley and myself—esteem, and feel a deep interest in you. Will you not be my brother, Theodore? Our home shall be yours, we will supply your present benefactor. The gloom and solitude of a monastery's walls will not suit your young spirit."

"Lady—urge me not—I will never leave him!" he said firmly, while his heart overflowed with thankfulness for the kind and affectionate interest she manifested in his welfare.

At that moment an aged man, bent with the weight of years, with a majestic face, although deeply lined with the furrows of time, came to the state-room door, and in a feeble voice, called to the youth.

"Who is that old man, Theodore?" she inquired with interest, while her eyes filled with tears as she thought of her own venerable father.

"It is old Lafon, senora. He was taken prisoner a few weeks since by one of our cruisers, and having been at times insane, was compelled by the officer—Martinez, I think—who captured him, to perform such menial duties as were suitable to his age."

"Was not this unfeeling, Theodore? Where was your chief?"

"It was, lady. On account of his numerous duties, Captain Lafitte, who permitted no cruelties of that kind, was ignorant of this degradation—for, miserable as he now is, he appears to have seen happier and brighter days—but when he heard of it, he released him from his duties. We stopped at Barrataria after we left the Balize a few days ago, to take on board some treasure concealed there, and found the old man on shore, nearly famished and torpid with exposure to the cold and rain, and took him on board, with the intention to leave him in Havana, where he has friends."

"Is he insane, did you say, Theodore?" she inquired.

"He has been—but I think is not now."

"Poor man! He is, no doubt the victim of some great affliction," she said, with feeling.

"Do you know anything of his past history?"

"I do not, senora. He is studiously silent on that subject."

"Is he now a menial?" she continued, looking with sympathy upon the aged man, who still stood with one hand upon the lock of the door, and his body half-protruded into the room—in which position he remained during their low-toned conversation waiting for Theodore.

"No, senora. He is now passenger in the schooner, and by kindness and attention to him, the captain seeks to atone for the rigorous treatment he has heretofore received. He also feels a strange and unaccountable interest in him."

"Go, Theodore; keep him not in waiting—he speaks again."

The youth left the apartment, to ascertain his wishes, which were, to communicate, through him, to Lafitte, some instructions relating to his landing at Havana; and then ascended to the deck, to ascertain the rate of sailing and position of the vessel which, bowing before a favorable breeze, was within less than two days' sail of her port of destination.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIGHT OFF THE MORO CASTLE.

"MY eye, Bill, but that's a rare tit-bit in the offing," exclaimed a sailor straddled athwart the main-yard of an American brig-of-war—anchored near the entrance of the harbor—ostensibly securing a gasket, but in reality roving his one eye over the harbor of Havana, its lofty castellated Mero, its walls, towers, and cathedral domes, its fleet of shipping, and its verdant scenery, luxuriant and green even in the second month of winter.

"That she is!" returned his shipmate, further in on the same yard, at the same time cocking his larboard eye to windward, hitching up his loose trowsers and thrusting into his cheek a generous quid of tobacco, dropped from the topgallant-yard by a brother tar. "That she is, Sam; and she moves in stays, like a Spanish girl in a jig, and that's as fine as a fairy, to my fancy."

"Lay to, there, my hearty! Blast my eyes, if I haven't seen the broadside of that craft before now. If it's not a clipper we chased in the brig last month, cruising off St. Domingo, you may say, 'stop grog.'"

"What! one o' yer bloody pirates?" inquired Sam, with an oath.

"Ay! and she run in-shore, and lay alongside of a high rock, up which they mounted like so many wild monkeys. We followed 'em as fast; but they beat us off and sent to the bottom of the sea, twenty as brave fellows as ever handled cutlass."

"What is this?" observed languidly one of the lieutenants on deck, interrupting a most luxurious yawn, "that those fellows can feel an interest in this infernal hot weather? Take that glass, will you, Mr. Edwards, and make us wise in the matter."

The young midshipman rose indolently from an ensign on which he had ensconced himself to leeward of the mizzenmast to avoid the extreme heat, even on that winter day—for winter holds no empire through that lovely clime—and after several unsuccessful attempts at last brought the instrument into conjunction with his visual organ. He then gazed a moment seaward, and his face, before expressionless, now beamed with pleasure.

"By all that's lovely, that craft carries a pretty foot. She glides over the water like a swan; and yet there's hardly breeze enough to fan a lady's cheek. Look at her, sir."

The officer took the glass, and slightly raising himself so that he could see over the quarter, the next moment convinced those around him that his features had not lost all their flexibility and that his muscles were not really dissolved by the heat, by exclaiming still more eagerly than the midshipman:

"Beautiful! admirable!"

"Can you make out her colors?" inquired one lying upon the deck, under the awning, without raising his head, or moving from his indolent attitude.

"She carries the stars and stripes, yet she cannot be an American. There is not a boat in the navy to be compared to this craft for beauty and velocity."

"She is an armed vessel?"

"Evidently—although she shows gun nor port. She looks too saucy for a quakeress; her whole bearing is warlike; and there is a frigate half a mile to windward of her, I believe in chase."

By this time, the officers, yielding to curiosity, abandoned, though reluctantly, their various comfortable positions, and gathered themselves up, to take a view of a vessel that had induced even their ease-loving first lieutenant to throw off his lethargy.

The object of general interest—a beautiful, taunt-rigged, rakish schooner, now advanced steadily toward the entrance of the harbor. The air was scarcely in motion, yet she glided over the water with the ease and rapidity of a bird on the wing.

"By Heaven! that craft has been in mischief!" exclaimed an officer, "or that frigate would not spread such a cloud of studden'-sails in chase."

"She is no doubt a rover," said Edwards, "and looks for all the world like the twin-sister of the one we chased into that pirate's hole in the Gulf of Gonzaves, where poor Eustis lost his life—if not the very same. Shall we give him a gun, sir, at any rate, for running under our flag?"

"No, no! we will remain neutral. As true as that schooner has lighter heels than any craft that ever sailed the sea, she will escape her pursuer!" exclaimed the lieutenant, with animation.

"Unless taken between wind and water!" added another officer. "See that!"

As he spoke, a flame flashed from the bows of the frigate, and a shot, followed by the report of a heavy gun, re-echoed over the waves, and carried away the bowsprit of the schooner, which was about half a mile from the frigate.

"My God! we shall be blown out of the water by that hasty count!" exclaimed Lafitte, as the shot struck his vessel—for on board the Gertrude we now take our readers. "Hoist that white flag at the peak!" he shouted.

The order was obeyed; still the frigate bore down upon them, and a second shot shivered her foremast, killed several of the crew, including his mate Ricardo, and mortally wounded his favorite slave Cudjoe.

The schooner was now wholly unmanageable—and, defeated in his exertions to get into the harbor, Lafitte put her before the wind, which was now increasing, and ran her ashore, about a mile to the eastward of the Moro.

The frigate continued in chase until the water became too shallow for her draught, when she lay to and put off two of her boats filled with men, the smallest of which was commanded by the count in person.

Lafitte, although determined not to fight unless compelled to do so in self-defense, ordered his men to their guns. The cannonades were double-shotted, and hand-grenades, boarding-pikes, and cutlasses, strewed the deck. He himself was armed with a cutlass and brace of pistols, and a shade of melancholy was cast over his features, which, or the thoughts occasioning it, he sought to dispel by giving a succession of rapid and energetic orders to his men.

The count, who learned from the prisoner he had taken at Barrataria, that this was Lafitte's vessel, which he had fallen in with the day before, after missing him at the Balize—stood in the stern of his boat, which swiftly approached the grounded schooner. His face was pale and rigid with settled passion. He grasped the hilt of his cutlass nervously, and his eye glanced impatiently over the rapidly-lessening distance between him and his revenge. He saw his rival standing calmly upon the quarter-deck, surveying his approach with seeming indifference. This added fuel to his rage, and he cheered his oarsmen with frenzied energy.

"Count D'Oyley," said Lafitte, aloud, as the boat came near the schooner, "she whom you seek is safe, and in honor!"

"Thou liest! slave! villain!" shouted the count; at the same moment the boat struck the side of the schooner, and he leaped, sword in hand, onto her deck, followed by a score of his men.

"Now, or we shall be massacred! Fire!" cried Lafitte, in a voice that rung above the shouts of the boarders, at the same time parrying a blow aimed at his breast by the count. The light vessel recoiled, shuddering in every point, from the discharge of her whole broadside, which was fatally hurled. The larger boat, which was within a few fathoms of the schooner, was instantly sunk, and fifty men were left struggling in the waves. The barge alongside shared the same fate, before half of its crew had gained the deck of the vessel.

A fierce and sanguinary contest now took place. Lafitte in vain called to the count to desist—that Constanza was on board in safety.

"Liar in thy throat! villain!" with more rapid and energetic blows of his cutlass, was alone the reply he received from his infuriated antagonist. Lafitte now fought like a tiger at bay upon the quarter-deck, his followers encircling him, each hand to hand and steel to steel with a boarder.

Two nobler-looking men than the distinguish-

ed combatants have seldom trod the battle-deck of a ship-of-war. In courage, skill, and physical energies, they seemed nearly equal, although the count was of slighter make and possessed greater delicacy of features. Cutlass rung against cutlass, and the loud clangor of their weapons was heard far above the din and uproar of battle. The combatants on both sides, as if actuated by one impulse, simultaneously suspended the fight to gaze upon their chief, as if victory depended alone upon this single encounter.

They fought for some moments with nearly equal success, mutually giving and receiving several slight wounds, when a blow, intended by Lafitte—who fought altogether on the defensive—to disarm his antagonist, shivered his steel boarding-cap. It dropped to the deck, and a profusion of rich, auburn hair fell down from his head, and clustered with almost feminine luxuriance about his neck. At the same instant, his sword passed through the breast of Lafitte.

A wild exclamation, not of pain, but of surprise and horror escaped him, and springing backward, he stood staring with dilated nostrils, a heaving breast, from which a stream of blood flowed to the deck, and eyes almost starting from their sockets, upon the count.

"Art thou of this world? speak!" he cried in accents of terror, while his form seemed agitated with superhuman emotion.

The count remained in an attitude of defense, displaying by the derangement of his hair, a scar in the shape of a crescent over his brow. Transfixed with astonishment, he gazed upon his foe, who moved not a muscle, nor betrayed any sign of life, except in the deep sepulchral tones, with which he conjured him "to speak!"

The count slightly changed his position, an exclamation of joy escaped the venerable Lafon, and tottering forward, he fell into his outstretched arms.

"Henri, my son—my only son!"

"My father!" and they were clasped in each other's arm.

Their close embrace was interrupted by a deep groan and heavy fall of Lafitte to the deck.

"Henri! It is indeed my brother!" exclaimed the wounded man, raising his head—"for—forgive me, Henri, before I die!" and he fell back again to the deck.

At the sound of his name, the count started, gazed earnestly upon his pale features for an instant, and all the brother yearned in his bosom.

With a heart bursting with the intensity of his feelings, he silently knelt by his side.

"Achille!"

"Henri!"

They could utter no more, but in silence embraced—the count laying his head upon his brother's bosom, whose arms encircled him with fraternal love, while the aged parent, kneeling beside the reunited brothers, with his uplifted hands blessed them.

Suddenly a loud scream pierced their ears! Starting up, the count beheld Constanza making her way with a wild air toward him, followed by Theodore, who had, till now, detained her in the state-room, lest, in her excitement of mind, she should mingle among the combatants. The voice of her lover reached her ears in the silence that followed the discovery of the brothers, and she flew to the deck.

"Oh, Alphonse! my Alphonse! we will part no more!" she exclaimed, throwing herself into his arms.

The count affectionately embraced her; but his face betrayed, the while, great emotion, and his eye sought his brother's.

"Take her! fold her in your arms, Henri! She is yours—spotless as an angel!" he replied, comprehending the meaning of his glance. "Here, Constanza, let me take your hand—yours, Henri!" and he joined them together:—"May God bless and make you truly happy!"

"My father! my venerable father!" he continued, while his voice grew more feeble, "I am ashamed to look you in the face! Forgive your repentant and dying son!"

The aged man knelt by his side, and wept over him in silence.

"My brother—Henri!" he continued, "I have wronged you; but I have suffered for it! how deeply, language cannot tell! How painfully and fatally true, that crime brings its own punishment! Forgive me, Henri! Think not you have slain me—mine is the blame. I armed your hand against my life!"

At that moment, as Henri bent over him, a locket sparkling with jewels, obtruded from his bosom, and caught the eyes of Achille. With a cry of joy he seized it, and pressing it to his lips, kissed it impassionedly.

Then holding it from him, he gazed upon the lineaments of the miniature—his pale countenance beaming with pleasure—while he spoke, as if to himself:

"My mother! my sainted mother! These eyes have never beheld those lovely features beaming with life and intellect! This dear image is all I have ever known of thee—and this I have loved from infancy, as if it were thyself! Henri," he added, turning calmly to his brother,

and grasping his hand, "Henri, this little locket, that should have been the bond to unite us to each other, was the innocent instrument of our long and bitter separation. Father! at such a time as this I would not grieve you needlessly, but it was your partiality for my brother, which, acting on a weak and hasty temper led me first to hate him! Then may God forgive us both!"

The old man groaned, and in silence bent over his child.

"Henri, my brother Henri!—I love to repeat a name so dear to my childhood—I am dying! Clasp this locket with me, thus! Hold it with me in the same brotherly grasp. Let it be the seal of our reconciliation here, and our reunion with the blessed original in a better world."

Together they clasped their hands over the locket, while the count, deeply affected, wept in silence.

"Constanza forgive me!" he continued. "I have loved you to my dying hour! Farewell," he added, after a moment's silence, while they all kneeled around him. "Farewell, my father—brother—Constanza—all farewell! Theodore," he said, affectionately taking his hand, "Theodore, my orphan boy, farewell! May God bless and protect you, my child! Henri! be a brother to him."

The count pressed his hand in silence.

"Now, once more—adieu for—forever. May Heaven be merciful to my guilty soul"—and, with this prayer on his lips, he expired in the arms of his brother and Theodore.

After the death of his pirate benefactor Theodore was adopted by the Count D'Oyley, who, after his marriage with Constanza, purchased a handsome plantation-home below New Orleans, and thither the scenes of my story are now transferred.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STRANGE BRIG.

ONE autumn twilight, five years after the peace was ratified between the two belligerents, Great Britain and the United States, a group might have been observed gathered on the portico of an elegant villa situated on the banks of the Mississippi, a few miles below the city. This group consisted of six persons. In a large arm-chair sat an old gentleman with a dignified air and a bland smile upon his countenance, dancing upon his knee a lovely child in her third summer, while an old female slave, crouched at his feet, was amusing the delighted girl with her antics. It was "ole Juana."

Near the steps of the portico stood a gentleman of middle age with a lofty forehead, slightly disfigured by a scar, a mild blue eye and manly features, who was directing the attention of a beautiful female, leaning affectionately on his arm, to the maneuvers of a small vessel-of-war, then doubling one of the majestic curves of the river. It was the Count and Countess D'Oyley. The lady united in her face and person the dignity of the matron with the loveliness of the maiden. The sweet face of the little girl on its grandsire's knee was but the reflection of her image in miniature.

Leaning against one of the columns of the portico stood a noble-looking and very handsome young man of twenty-one, in a hunting-dress. A gun rested carelessly upon one arm, and a majestic dog, venerable with age, whom he occasionally addressed as "Leon," stood upon his hind feet with his fore-paws against his breast. This was Theodore!

They were interested in watching the maneuvers of a small brig-of-war ascending the river, a mile below the mansion. The abode of Count D'Oyley was an elegant edifice, situated on the river not far below the "battle-ground." It was stuccoed and colored a delicate lemon tint, and had a remarkably airy, graceful appearance amid its lemon and orange gardens. It was elevated upon massive pillars eight feet above the lawn, the space beneath being paved with stone and forming cool and agreeable corridors for exercise in the heat of summer. The house, thus elevated above the level country, was surrounded by a veranda, broad and lofty, protected from the sun by pendent blinds. The windows of several rooms opened upon it, and it served as a general drawing-room for the family. From this veranda or portico was obtained a fine view of the orange gardens around it; of the majestic river a mile in breadth that flowed past within an eighth of a mile, the eye being able to follow its noble curves for several leagues north and east. The opposite shores, with their pleasant villas and gardens and broad sugar fields, were also visible. The river was now glowing in the setting sun like a scarf of gold and purple. Here and there its broad bosom was relieved by the canvas of a ship making her slow way up to the city, or the naked masts and spars of one floating downward with the current. But the object that now drew the attention of the group in the veranda had a more interesting character than that of a merchant-vessel, numbers of which were daily passing by on the river.

It was a very elegant, light-armed brig, that a few moments before had made its appearance round a point. She was standing westward, for such was the course of the winding river at

that place. The wind was south and light, but she had only her royals and topgallantsails set with her jib, her fore course hanging in festoons and her topsails neatly furled to the yard. The sails were finely relieved against the dark green of the forests on the banks, close in with which she was steering.

"What a beautiful vessel, monsieur," said Theodore, his dark eyes animated as he gazed on her exquisite proportions with the eye of a young sailor.

"She has a hull like the Gertrude," remarked the Count D'Oyley; but as he spoke a sad expression passed over his countenance, which was reflected from the faces of both the countess and the young man. That word unguardedly spoken had brought to all painful and touching memories. After a moment's silence he resumed:

"The sun was already below the horizon before she hove in sight, and then her colors were hauled down. If we had seen her ten minutes earlier we could have ascertained her nation."

"She is English, I think," said Theodore. "Her yards are too square for an American vessel, and they are also painted jet-black, which is peculiar to British vessels-of-war."

"You are right, Theodore. Juana, go in the hall and bring me my spy-glass."

"Juana is amusing little Gertrude," said the countess, "I will fetch it for you, Alphonse."

"Thanks, my dear obliging wife," said the count, removing the telescope from her hand with a smile.

Theodore also had passed from the veranda through one of the door-like windows into his own room and returned with another glass. As he opened it the name of "Lafitte" was visible engraved upon the side. Both leveled their glasses at the same moment at the brig; and both in the same breath pronounced her to be English.

"She has a gilt St. George's cross on a black ground for a figure-head," said Theodore.

"And also on the bows of her first cutter," said the count. "The glow of the evening is reflected brightly upon it."

"It is five years since an English vessel-of-war has passed up this river, and then with hostile intentions. What can be her business? She is certainly a perfect masterpiece of nautical beauty. What just proportion between her spars and hull; and what a finished model she appears in the eye of a seaman."

"There is no fault in her," said the count, "unless it may be she is an inch or two too deep! I can't divine her purpose in ascending the river. If it was a diplomatic visit she would put into Norfolk. Perhaps it is some matter touching the commerce between us and the British West Indies. Hark! hear that clear whistle from her! They are piping hammocks down. Constanza, dear, that sound makes me feel as if I was once more on the deck of my frigate, *Le Sultan*," said the count, thrusting the glass under his arm and pacing two or three times up and down the veranda, as if on the deck of a ship.

"She is well manned, monsieur," said Theodore, who still surveyed her through his glass as she slowly moved up-stream in the shadow of the shade. "The whole crew are now visible taking their hammocks from the nettings. She carries at least one hundred and fifty men; a large number for a brig of sixteen guns, and in time of peace."

The count, who had been gently reproved by the countess for presuming to think of the sea again, of which her former experience had given her a great horror, which she had persuaded him to give up altogether after their marriage, again raised his glass and confirmed Theodore's estimate of the number of men.

"The wind is falling quite to sleep with the close of day," said he. "They will have to drop their anchor shortly, or lose what they have gained. We shall then have guests, my love. If they anchor I shall take my barge and go on board and invite the officers to dine with me to-morrow. It is a rare chance to have for such secluded people as we are."

"I am half-afraid to trust you on board," said the Countess Constanza, half-seriously, half-playfully; "for I don't know but that the society of officers and the fascination of a vessel-of-war, may, after they are gone, make you discontent with our retirement, and in secret you will sigh for the stirring life you have led."

"No, my dear Constanza," answered the count with a sorrowful air and shaking his head with melancholy firmness.

"No, I shall never return to sea on which I was so unfortunate as to pursue and bring to death my poor brother Achilles. Not less your wishes than my feelings led me to resign my ship—a profession which led me to results so painful. We will let the brig-of-war pass on its way. I wish not to visit it, lest it revive too vividly the scenes of my brother's death, for the vessel in her model has a resemblance to his that cannot fail to bring back to me, if I step on board, the scene where I was unwittingly the slayer of my poor brother."

"Grieve not yourself, my noble husband. It is past, and the fact of your ignorance of the near relationship that existed between you and him who was called 'Lafitte,' should acquit you to yourself as it does to Heaven."

"Your words are full of wisdom and tranquillity," said the count, with grateful tenderness. "Theodore shall go on board. Look at him now, as he stands there by the column, tall and manly, with a form and air and aspect of a noble. How proud and lofty his carriage, yet how gentle and benign his manner. As he has grown up to manhood, how distinguished are the proportions into which his form has developed itself. He must doubtless resemble his unknown father, for methinks his father must have had such a form, and if so, he must have been a true nobleman. He of whom Theodore is the son was, I am assured, no ordinary individual."

The countess turned and surveyed the fine person of the young man with affectionate, proud admiration, as he stood unconscious of their regard, gazing through the glass at the brig. His appearance fully justified the count's eulogistic expressions. His hair was dark as the wing of the raven, and fell upon the cape of his hunting coat in luxuriant glossy masses. His forehead was high and bold, if not commanding; and his eyebrows were finely arched and expressive. His eyes were black and animated and full of fire and soul. His cheek was brown mixed with red, and his lip was shaded by an elegant mustache, which gave strength and energy to the outline of a mouth which from its delicacy and finish would have been perhaps, otherwise too womanly in its beauty. The expression of his features was frank, generous and open, with an inclination to vivacity; though at times sad thoughts would pass over it when he reflected upon the mystery that hung around his life.

The death of his benefactor had left him without one whom he could regard in the place of a parent; and long and deeply had he mourned his loss. It is true, that the Count D'Oyley, to whom Lafitte had intrusted him with his expiring breath, had been faithful to his charge, and the Countess Constanza had been both a sister and a mother to the noble youth to whom she owed her honor and her life. But the affectionate interest of the Count in him, and the tender regard of Constanza would not fill the place in his heart ever occupied by him who, though an outlaw and a man of crime, had long been to him a father.

As Theodore increased in years his desire to ascertain his parentage grew upon him to an extent of painful solicitude; and he had more than once formed the notion of leaving the house of his friends and casting himself upon the world to see if circumstances in the course of adventures might not reward him with success. But a second reflection showed him the absurdity of such a step; and gratitude bound him to those who were too much attached to him to suffer him to leave them, except for a career of honorable service, to which he secretly aspired. He was weary of inactivity. His spirit was too ambitious or active to rest satisfied with only the excitement of shooting and the chase, which were the sole recreations within his reach. He panted for action.

"She yields to the current and falls down the stream, now the wind has died to a calm," said Theodore. "I see them on the bows preparing to let drop the anchor."

"They will drop in twenty fathoms there," said the count. "I would advise them to send a hawser ashore and lay along the bank. But this would be too close shore for the men. We should soon have our estate overrun with men-o-war's-men, egg and duck-hunting. There goes her anchor! Well, they will ride snugly there where they are, a hundred yards from the shore, till morning. See, Constanza, how nimbly those men fly aloft to furl the top-gallantsails and royals! Well, Theodore, we have neighbors it seems."

The young man did not reply—he did not hear the remark addressed to him. The Count regarded him a moment and saw that he was lost in thought. Whatever his reflections were they seemed to be of a character to deepen the color of his cheek and kindle his eye. He stood with the glass resting on the hollow of his arm, his gaze fixed evidently in the direction of the brig. The count seemed to divine his thoughts. He approached him, and touched his hand with a slight blow of his finger.

"Monsieur Theodore," he said, smiling, "if you betray your wishes so clearly on your face you must not be surprised if they are interpreted. You are thinking you would like to commit your fortunes to yonder vessel-of-war. You are weary of us and would go into the world and mingle with men. Am I not a good necromancer?"

"You have truly divined my thoughts, noble count," answered Theodore, coloring; "but you do me injustice in saying that I am weary of you. Whom have I to love or to care for me but you and the Countess Constanza?" he said, with generous emotion.

"I meant no reproach, my dear Theodore. It is natural that you desire to enter upon a field

of active life where your courage, your talents, your person are sure to open before you a road to distinction. But you must not leave us yet. The five years repose you have had with me will hardly balance the ten years of constant service in which you remained with my brother from the time he took you up at sea, until the day he fell upon his own deck, alas, by my hand. You must remain with me another year, and in the mean time I will see what can be done for you in the American navy."

"I am not an American, count," said Theodore, with emphasis. "Dearly as I love the country which you have adopted, for which I, my benefactor, fought, I feel an irresistible attachment toward the land which I know to be that in which I was born—perhaps where at this moment I have dwelling a mother—a sister—a father! Toward this land my heart ever turns instinctively when my thoughts dwell upon my parents. If I serve at sea, it will be beneath the flag of that country which memory and instinct tell me is my home!"

"I have not asked you, dear Theodore, why you suppose you were of English rather than of American birth; for, as you have said, of one or the other you must have been since you spoke the language of both countries?"

"My memory is of the past like a dream, monsieur. I was hardly seven years of age when I was rescued by Lafitte, and although I doubtless remembered at that time events of my life, they have now and for some years wholly faded from my mind, save certain vague impressions, that may be either rational or dreams, and imperfect recollections of my childhood."

"And what are these dreams, Theodore?" asked the countess, who had approached and listened to him with interest. "I remember once you told me that you had positive recollection of being surrounded by splendor."

"And yet now, dear Countess, I am uncertain whether to refer these ideas to dreams or to memory. All is uncertain, misty, vague, painfully indefinite." And he pressed his hand upon his brow with a sad expression of disappointment that told how much he had suffered his thoughts to dwell upon the past.

"You did not say, Theodore, why you thought you were English instead of American?" said the count, repeating his inquiry with the desire to divert his mind from its momentary depression.

"This belief is founded upon the fact that Captain Lafitte thought the fragment of wreck upon which he found me, to be a portion of an English vessel-of-war, and partly from my recollections (or dreams they may be) of having in my childhood seen London with its palaces and grandeur. I have a perfect impression upon my mind of the interior and exterior of princely edifices that have no counterpart in America. I remember, in particular, one scene of great splendor which I cannot describe, but which I am satisfied I have seen in another land than this. All this is very indefinite; and I do not draw from it any conclusion as to my having been nurtured in such scenes, for I may have been a laborer's son, and yet seen them and been thus impressed by them. But I draw from it with great confidence the assurance that I am a native of the land in which I beheld them. Now all that I know of myself you know of me, my friends. I have sometimes indulged in the hope that I should be able to discover who were my parents. In these dreams—these memories! for I will call them such—I have also the most tender idea of a mother and a sister who tenderly loved me. And Captain Lafitte has said that for the first few days after I was rescued I often called upon them."

"And by what name on your sister?" asked the countess, with deep interest.

"GRACE; so he told me, for I do not remember it; GRACE—a name that I have treasured in my heart, and the sound of which I have almost worshiped."

"And your mother?" continued the countess. "I called upon her only by the maternal appellation common to all mothers."

"And your own name you recollected?"

"Yes—Theodore, and no more. At times this uncertainty almost makes me wild with intense, burning curiosity."

"This feeling is natural but unwise, dear Theodore," said the Countess Constanza, affectionately. "Perhaps your parents no longer live. But we are your parents and we live to make you happy."

The young man pressed with respectful tenderness the hand of the countess to his lips and turned away to hide his emotion. In a moment after, he spoke:

"You are right, dear countess—dear mother, if I may thus denominate you! I will no more regret what may not be remedied. I will think of no other parents than you both, of no other sister than of the dear little Gertrude."

Hearing her name spoken by him, the lovely girl clambered from her grandpa's knees and ran toward him with her dimpled arms extended. Theodore raised her up in his arms and kissed her, and she hugged him about the neck and called him her "good brother Teedy."

"This little prattler has sealed the compact, dear mother. From this day I am your son,

and if it will make you and the count happy I will forego all my idle visions of the future."

"You are generous, Theodore," said the countess. "I know this resolution will cost you a great sacrifice. But rest assured in the end you will be more tranquil for it."

"Perhaps," said the count, "in the course of Divine Providence you may yet be placed in the way of discovering your parentage. Next spring I contemplate visiting France. On our route we will take England; there I will assist you in making such inquiries as will serve to unfold the secret of your birth. Advertisements in the London Gazette stating the facts, the date, the names of yourself and Grace, may possibly lead to a discovery."

"Your words have awakened in me new hope, and aroused once more all my impatience," said Theodore, with animation, yet with a smile. "I shall look forward to the spring with anxiety."

"And yet, dear Theodore, you may be disappointed at last," said the countess. "Hope—expect nothing."

"I will be as passive, dearest mother, as an infant," he said, pressing her hand, and looking cheerfully.

"See how beautifully the brig sits there upon the tide, everything furled as snug as a lady's curls done up for a ball," said the count.

"What say you, my Theodore, shall we order the boat out and pull down to her? In courtesy we ought to extend some civility to her commander, as the brig lays abreast of my sugar fields, though half a mile below the house. I have some curiosity to know who she is and her business up the river. Nay then, Constanza, if you object, I will stay here and Theodore shall go."

"I will take the boat and pull down to her, monsieur," said Theodore, "and obtain all the information you desire."

"Do not, Theodore," said the countess, with singular earnestness. "I have a strange presentiment of evil associated with that vessel."

"And with all vessels, I believe," said the count, laughing, while he gave to her a look of gentle sympathy with her feelings.

"I will not go then, if you desire me to remain," said Theodore, who had already reached the steps of the veranda to descend into the lawn.

"It may be foolish in me, Theodore, but I beg you will let the vessel remain unvisited. If there be evil connected with her presence here let us not court it."

"I fear, Constanza," said the count, kindly, "that you will never conquer your feelings with regard to vessels. But your past sufferings on board by capture and shipwreck are a sufficient reason for these fears. But there is really nothing to fear in the present instance. The brig is a national vessel of the British nation, and can inflict on us no evil in this time of peace. Her presence here is pacific at the least."

"Yet I should rather not that you or Theodore should go on board."

"It shall be as you wish," answered the count, putting his glass to his eye. "Take your spy-glass, Theodore, and look with me and see if you do not discern a boat putting off from her on the larboard side. It has got so dark I cannot distinctly make it out."

"It is a boat, monsieur," said Theodore, after a moment's inspection. "It has dropped astern of the brig, and now is concealed."

"They will probably pay us a visit by and by, wife," said the count, "and then our curiosity will be gratified without the risk you fear."

At this moment a slave appeared on the veranda and announced tea, and they all retired together to a central saloon in the mansion, in which this meal was usually served.

They had just finished their repast, and in listening to the prattle and merry laughter of Gertrude, who was amusing herself and them with her grandpa's spectacles on the tranquil and majestic countenance of the venerable dog Leon, they had quite forgot the brig-of-war, when a slave, dressed in white, with a yellow scarf tied upon his head like a turban, save that it had the addition of a huge rosette, entered, and announced the arrival of guests.

"Who?" demanded the count, rising.

Before the servant could reply the guests, who had followed him in from the lawn, made their appearance in the entrance of the hall. The count advanced and hospitably saluted them, while the countess and Theodore rose from their seats. They were three in number. One of them, the nautical eye of the count at once recognized to be a post-captain in the British navy; one of the other two was an officer of the army in undress uniform, but evidently of high rank; the third was a sergeant of marines, who remained behind them.

"Messieurs, you are welcome," said the Count D'Oyley, with a courtesy and bearing that at once convinced the two they stood in the presence of a man of rank equal to their own.

"We beg your pardon for this intrusion," said the naval captain, who was shorter and considerably stouter than his military companion, "but your servant bade us follow him without ceremony as he proceeded to announce

us. We have the honor of addressing the Count D'Oyley?" he inquired interrogatively.

"Yes, gentlemen, and it affords me pleasure to see you beneath my roof. Be seated. You have not taken coffee?"

"You are very kind," said the military gentleman, a tall fine-looking man, advancing a step and speaking with the air and ease of a finished gentleman; "but we must first introduce ourselves. This is Captain Stewart of his Britannic majesty's frigate the Minerva, now lying at the mouth of the river, and I am General McDonald of the British army."

The count bowed low to both gentlemen, and then presented them to the countess and introduced to them Theodore. Coffee was handed to them, and after a few general remarks, General McDonald made known his business.

"The unfortunate field on which General Pakenham fell," he remarked, "is, I learn, less than a league above your estate."

The count bowed.

"By the side of that officer fell my brother, his near relation, a colonel of Hussars," continued General McDonald; "and I have come hither in this armed brig, which you have probably seen drop her anchor in the river below, for the purpose of removing his remains to Westminster Abbey. Captain Stewart's frigate will take them on board at the mouth of the river, in which I shall accompany them to England. Ascertaining that the grave in which he is interred, to be on your estate, I have first visited you, Monsieur Count, to ask permission to remove the remains."

"Such a request I assure you, general, was wholly unnecessary, even were you correct in supposing it was in my power to comply with it," answered Count D'Oyley with respectful sympathy for the sacred errand on which he had come. "My estate does not extend to the battle-ground nor nearer than a mile and a half."

"The grave of my brother I am told is not on the ground where he fell, but what is now your property, monsieur. He was borne from the field and at his own request buried beneath a sycamore tree, which a guide I have brought with me will designate, he having been one of the party who committed him to the grave."

"Every facility in my power shall be afforded you in your sad tribute to your brother's memory," said the Count D'Oyley with emotion, his thought reverting to the remains of his own brother which he had secretly buried after the conflict in which he had fallen, in a retired spot outside of the walls of Havana, in sight of the sea on which he had passed and ended his adventurous career.

"The sycamore I remember, sir, and also the grave beneath it," said Theodore, addressing General McDonald, speaking with animation and yet with that tender regard for the feelings of the strangers, which became the time. "I stood by it to day when I was abroad hunting."

The English general, while Theodore spoke, fixed upon him a look of extraordinary intensity, that attracted the attention both of Count D'Oyley and the countess. It was a look that seemed to be called up by emotions wholly independent of any that the words of Theodore in reference to the grave might have caused. It seemed to be an expression of mingled curiosity and surprise, and a half-recognition. His earnest scrutiny embarrassed the object of it, and being recalled to himself by his heightened color, General McDonald merely said: "Pardon me, sir, I was a moment lost in thought. What said you of my brother's grave?"

"That grave is still to be seen beneath a sycamore tree, half a league above, near the bank of the river," answered Theodore.

"It must be Lord Edward's grave," answered the general, and again he rested his full gaze upon the form and features of the young man, till embarrassed, and hardly knowing whether to be offended or not, Theodore rose and retired from the saloon to the veranda.

CHAPTER X.

THE RECOGNITION.

THE eye of General McDonald followed the retiring form of the young man with an expression of singular interest; he then, as if aware of having been drawn into an infringement of courtesy, turned and addressed Count D'Oyley upon the subject of the removal of the body of Lord Clarence.

"The moon will soon be up, Monsieur Count," he said to him, "and as I am desirous of economizing every hour of time, as the brig-of-war is commissioned for other services after taking the body down to the Minerva frigate, I shall with your permission proceed at once to the grave."

"It will give me great pleasure to accompany you, gentlemen," answered the count.

"As the wind is gone, perhaps it will be best to pull up to the spot in our boats," said Captain Stewart; "and at once take up the body and convey it on board the brig, without hauling the vessel up to the ground."

"That is our plan, captain."

"Gentlemen," said Count D'Oyley, "I beg you will allow me to take you there as soon as

the moon rises, in my carriage. The road is smooth and the ride will be short. Your boats can follow."

They expressed their acknowledgments of the count's courtesy, which they accepted; while the carriage was getting ready, they indulged in general conversation. In the mean while Theodore had passed out upon the veranda and, hearing the voices of men in the garden, he descended into it and slowly passed along the avenues, where he came upon a group of sailors that were awaiting their captain, and beguiling their time with eating oranges which they had plucked from the trees or picked up ripe from the ground. They stood aside with that respectful deference seamen show to those they suppose their superiors, and Theodore, speaking with the frankness of a true sailor, a cheerful "Good-evening, my lads," walked on and took his way thoughtfully toward the river.

"I say, Bill, that was a 'bob,'" said one of the tars.

"Yes, he is no fresh-water fish," answered another of the men. "His voice and the way he spoke to us rung of the quarter-deck."

"If he'd been a shore long-tog," remarked the first sailor, "he would have passed us with his sky-sails set and never condescended to give us a salute."

"Or," said a third, plucking a ripe orange from the branch above his head, "if he had spoken, it would not have been 'my lads,' but a gruff 'good-even' or 'good-even' gentlemen," an appellation no quarter-deck bob would ever think of insulting an old tar with."

"You are right, Ned," answered the first speaker, in a very positive tone. "But let us leave ahead out of this and anchor under the lee of that green piazzy, and wait for our bobs or we'll be overhauled for cruisin' without leave." And the tars, who were eight in number, having filled their jacket pockets with ripe fruits, steered toward the house to wait for the officers, standing at the foot of the steps leading to the veranda.

Theodore kept on his way, buried in thought. The sight of those officers had greatly agitated him. They were Englishmen—they were his countrymen! perhaps they had seen or known those who were his parents. He felt drawn toward them by kindly interest—and even the sailors, because they were English, he felt love for. "Oh," thought he as he walked slowly on, "Oh that I had no tie of gratitude to bind me to the count and countess. How soon would I place myself on the deck of this vessel. How soon would my feet tread the shores of my native England!"

Suffering his thoughts to flow in this current he felt a restless, increasing desire to unite his destiny with the brig. As he walked on he approached the river-side and in the shadow of a tree, he saw a boat with two men in it, one at the stern and the other at the bows. The moon was just advancing above the horizon and he was able to distinguish it as a man-of-war's boat. He approached and addressed the men with friendly interest, for he felt they were his countrymen. They were also seamen, and he regarded a sailor as a friend.

"What brig is that?" he asked, standing on the bank and glancing toward the vessel which was just visible far down the shore, the first beams of moonlight glittering upon the white line of its furled royals.

"His majesty's brig, the Sleuth Hound, sir," answered the coxswain in the stern, raising his hand respectfully to his hat as he spoke.

Theodore started with emotion. He remembered the name associated with painful reminiscences. With that very brig six years before, near the Isle of Pines, the Gertrude had fought a battle and beaten her off. He gazed upon the vessel a few moments with singular interest. His feelings were both sad and painful. With the past he had associations both pleasing and depressing. His recollections of Lafitte and of his goodness to him, were ever of the most tender and generous kind; but they had of late been mingled with the reflection that his benefactor was "a pirate," and that he himself had been for years a companion of pirates. His notions and ideas of what is due to society and its laws, had been enlarged by education and experience, and he had learned to see in the true light the character and profession of his benefactor, over whose crimes and errors his grateful attachment had cast a veil when he was with him. His remembrance of Lafitte, therefore, grew each day more painful and the more distressing, for while he condemned his character, the gratitude of his heart was not diminished. And while he reflected upon what he owed to him, he mourned that the object of his gratitude was one whose name he should fear and be ashamed to mention in the presence of honorable men. He strove to forget the past while his generosity would not suffer him to forget him to whom he owed life and protection. At the same moment his cheek would be tinged with the glow of affectionate remembrances and the deepest shame.

After gazing a long time in silence upon the indistinct vessel, which each moment, as the moon ascended, was coming more and more into the full light of its beams, he said sadly:

"No—neither that brig—nor any other vessel of my own country can bear my footsteps without infamy. I see, in its true features, my past life! If it was known by General McDonald—by Captain Stewart—that I had once been a pirate and was the intimate companion of Lafitte, had been in the very vessel that had fought the Sleuth Hound, would the latter officer suffer me to go on board of his vessel to commence a career of honor? No! but, thank God, they know it not. The secret is safe in my own bosom and in that of my dear friends. To be discovered would be ruin and infamy. The world judges not with justice. It weighs not circumstances and never advances palliations. It would not ask for causes, it would look only to facts. And these would condemn me! Yet I am not guilty. The past, such as it was, was forced upon me. It was either death in mid-ocean or a life of piracy. A pirate was my pursuer and he became my benefactor. Thanks to the over-watching Providence that conducted me through all the scenes of crime in which my youth was passed without taint—without bloodshed!" He remained a few moments gloomy and troubled, and then again fixing his eyes on the brig-of-war he said to the coxswain:

"How long, my lad, have you sailed in the brig?"

"Three years, sir," said the man rising and touching his tarpaulin.

"How long has Captain Stewart commanded her?"

"He is only a passenger in her, sir, he and the long-tog general. Captain Stewart's frigate is laying off the Balize. The brig is now commanded by Captain Lennox, sir."

"The same that has had command of her for the last six years?"

"Yes, sir; for seven—ever since she was built."

"Strange that I should again be thrown into the way of this vessel. I remember seeing Captain Lennox on board his brig in the action—for we lay some time within half pistol-shot; and possibly he saw and may recognize me. I almost fear to encounter him. With my present feelings—my elevated pride of character—I should rather die than be recognized as having been associated with the fiercest band of outlaws that ever swept the seas. But if such be my destiny, so be it."

While he was thus bitterly reflecting, the man in the boat spoke to the other to direct his attention to a lugger that was drifting down in the middle of the stream with her foresail set to steady her. There was nothing in the man's words to produce surprise, but his voice sounded harsh and was remarkably deep-toned; a voice such as one never forgets for its very disagreeableness. At hearing it, Theodore uttered an exclamation of surprise. He gazed intently upon the man's face, and recognized him as an English buccaneer who had sailed with Lafitte, and remarkable for his ferocity and sanguinary cruelty. The blood mounted to the veins of his forehead, and then rushed back to his heart like lightning.

"Yes, I feel that my fate is yet to reconnect me with the past," he said within himself, with anguish. "This is the man who is called 'Red Knife' for his bloody hand, and now he appears to bring to my mind the consciousness of my former degradation. He does not recognize me. For this I cannot be too thankful. Perhaps the change five years has produced in my person may forever be my protection. I will return to the house, lest I may be still discovered and addressed by the ruffian as 'Lafitte's Middy,' as I was designated. I could curse the event that led to my preservation, if constant fear of infamy is now to be my lot."

On his return to the house he found the count's barouche at the door, and met a servant who said that he had been sent in search of him. The count and the officers at the same moment made their appearance at the door.

"Ah, Theodore," said the count, "we have been waiting for you. The countess feared you had been tempted from your perch for the sea to visit the brig. Come, join me and these gentlemen in the carriage. The boat will pull along the shore."

"I have just sent the sergeant with orders to the coxswain," said Captain Stewart.

"With your permission, sir, I will go up in the boat," said Theodore, who felt too gloomy to have to endure society where he should be called upon to converse.

"As you please, young gentleman," answered the captain, getting into the barouche after General McDonald.

The moon was now shining full and bright, and the carriage rolled across the lawn toward the levee road, while Theodore retraced his steps to the boat. The men were already on board, with their oars in the air, and the coxswain was just about to give the order to let fall when he appeared.

"Hold on," he cried, and springing from the bank into the stern-sheets, he gave the command to "give way" in a tone that at once let the men see that they had to do with a sailor.

As the boat moved slowly up against the current in the shadow of the bank, Theodore threw

himself back in the stern-sheets and gave himself up to the reflections his situation created.

The last time he had been in a man-of-war's boat was when the dead body of Lafitte was borne ashore, in the cutter of the Sultan, to be buried outside the walls of Havana. As the boat moved on her way he seemed again carried back to his buccaneering days, and the sight of the face of "Red Knife," who pulled the bow oar, clearly visible in the moonlight, for a moment seemed to realize the past. Drawing his cloak closer about his features, he then began to wonder at the appearance of this man as one of the brig's crew; but then recollecting that most of Lafitte's men had shipped in the navy and merchant service, a few only pursuing their former piratical career, his surprise ceased. Still he could not help thinking that the man's presence then was fraught with evil to himself. The boat pulled steadily along within a few feet of the river-bank, and after half an hour's rowing, Theodore gave an order to the coxswain to steer toward a little inlet above which grew a live oak tree. Here he landed, and as he did so he thought the pirate gave him a fixed look. It might have been his fears. On ascending the levee he saw the carriage standing not far distant. He pursued his way up a lane bordered with Indian trees, and soon came in sight of the group beneath the sycamore. As he approached, General McDonald, with his head uncovered, and the moonlight streaming like silver down upon his head, was kneeling upon the grave, his face covered, and his whole manner expressive of deep emotion. Captain Stewart and the count also stood by with their heads bare, and Theodore imitated their act of respect both for the dead and the grief of the brother of the deceased nobleman. In a few moments General McDonald rose, and turning to the sergeant of marines, said:

"Was he buried in his uniform, Parkley?"

"He was, sir," answered the man, raising the back of his hand to the visor of his cap. "It was his lordship's wish."

"As we did not expect to take up the body to-night we have not brought the means, and will have to defer it, general," said Captain Stewart; "at least until we can send on board."

"I have provided for the omission, gentlemen," said the count, looking in the direction of a gang of slaves who at that moment made their appearance, with shovels and picks.

In a little while the grave of the noble soldier was laid open by the slaves, and the coffin raised to the surface of the ground by the seamen whom Captain Stewart sent for the boat. Every man came to the grave by his permission including the coxswain. A barrow was then constructed of their oars which they had brought with them and the coffin taken up on the shoulders of six of the seamen and slowly borne toward the boat. It was preceded by General McDonald, with his head uncovered, and followed by Count D'Oyley and Captain Stewart, and the train of slaves. It was a singular procession to see, passing along in the still shadows of the lane, the moonlight falling at intervals through the trees upon the coffin and upon the stately figure of the British general, and upon the others who accompanied it. Theodore was not of it. As he turned from the grave to follow the count, a hand was laid upon his arm! He looked around and beheld the English pirate, who had lingered behind. Theodore's first impulse was to betray ignorance of his person. He, therefore, spoke to him as calmly as he could; for the consciousness of being known to that man, almost burst his noble and brave heart, which, ambitious for honor and distinction, was so degraded by the "past" hanging like a chain upon his soul.

"What would you, my lad?"

"You don't know me?" said the man impudently.

"How should I know you?" said Theodore with difficulty repressing his desire to strike the man down.

"It may be policy to forget an old comrade, master Theodore! I am 'Red Knife.'"

"What would you have with me?" demanded Theodore, no longer avoiding a recognition; and speaking in a stern tone.

"Don't be quite so lofty, master," said the man with increasing audacity and with a menacing tone. "I heard from some of our old comrades in Havana that you had dropped anchor in this quarter, and so shipped in the English brig on purpose to come and pay you a visit for the memory of old days."

"And do you say your visit in the brig was on purpose to see me?" demanded Theodore with surprise and pain.

"Yes. And I expected a better reception from an old friend. I knew you when you came to the boat and spoke to the coxswain, tall and fine-looking as you've got to be; but seeing you didn't suspect an old fellow-craftsman was nigh, I spoke to let you hear my voice, to see if you would recognize that. And by the start you gave I saw you did. I then saw by the way you tacked and stood off that you didn't mean I should know you again. But I had not come from Havana and risked my life on board a brig I had once fought against to let you give me the go-by. So I resolved to watch

my opportunity and see you, if I had to let the brig sail without me, which I intend to do anyhow unless you go on board with me. I was happy to see you get into the cutter, but I didn't like to recognize an old shipmate before so many, you know, and so I waited for this opportunity, and now we are met and are alone, we can talk over old times without interruption."

Theodore could with difficulty conceal his disgust for this evil man and his familiar freedom of looks and speech. He, however, felt that it was policy to deal with him mildly and with forbearance. His mortification and chagrin at meeting again one of his former companions were indescribable.

"I recognize you fully, Elliot," said Theodore. "But in God's name what hath brought you hither?"

"As I just said, to see you."

"And what do you want with me?"

"Not so quick, good Master Theodore; I am quite as good as you at any time, and better, too, for that matter; for I know who my father was, which I think it would puzzle you to make out for yourself, unless it was Father Neptune," said the man, coarsely.

Theodore felt like taking the man by the throat and hurling him into the open grave by which they stood. But he saw that he was in the man's power, and that it was alone the consciousness of this that armed the pirate with insolence. Without making any reply to this insult, he said:

"You say you heard in Havana that I was here. Who told you?"

"Ricardo, Lafitte's lieutenant."

"And does he still live?" exclaimed Theodore.

"Yes—and at the old trade."

"He was not pardoned—I remember. The pardon of the President extended only to Americans by birth."

"And were you pardoned, Monsieur Theodore?"

"Yes."

"Can you prove that you are an American?"

Theodore at once saw the drift of the pirate's first question. He shuddered at the reflection that he was not; indeed, that he could not have been included in the pardon extended to Lafitte and others by the President's proclamation. He turned away his face and hid it in his cloak, while a deep sigh burst from him. It could not be concealed from his self-conviction. He was still outlawed. The only pardon that had been extended to him was that of the count, his benefactor. To the laws of the land, and of every land, he was still a pirate—an outlaw! Elliot gazed upon him with his evil countenance expressive of hellish malignity; for he plainly saw what the young man's reflections were.

"Well, what have you further to say?" asked Theodore, turning abruptly to him and speaking in a voice hoarse with emotion.

"That you must be one of us!" answered Elliot, with peculiar emphasis upon the last pronoun.

"What!" cried the young man, starting back a step and surveying by the broad moonbeams the face of the buccaneer. "Is it possible that you are still a freebooter?"

"Nothing more possible, good Master Theodore. I, being an Englishman, could not benefit by the pardon, and so followed my old career. Besides, I love it so well that if I had had the benefit of the President's pardon, I should still have carried my pardon in one pocket, and my free commission of the sea in the other."

"And you unblushingly confess this trade? Do you not know that you place your life in jeopardy in thus coming here? One word from me would hang you from the yard-arm of the English brig—?—war."

"Give the word, good master, and you put your neck in the same noose. Threats never'll do with me."

"What is it you want with me? Be brief in words, for I would follow the party."

"I shall take my own time. Your haughtiness has given me offense, or I would have paid you from the first the deference due to you as an officer and due to your courage; so, if I lack in respect you must thank yourself."

There was more civility in the man's tone than he had yet shown, and Theodore, feeling himself, his character, his prospects for the future, in some degree in the fellow's power, he assumed a more polite bearing.

"Well, Elliot, I meant no offense. I must confess your presence here surprised me not a little. It is five years since I have seen any of my old companions, and I believed myself quite forgotten by them."

"No doubt your nest is so well feathered, Master Theodore, you would still have liked to remain forgotten. But we all haven't been so fortunate as yourself. After we were broke up we scattered to the four winds. Some of us got a lugger and prowled awhile about the old haunts at Barrataria, but we didn't do much and went to Mexico. Some turned river-robbers in New Orleans, and degraded their profession in thieving from vessels at anchor and making forays ashore into gardens and hen-roosts. Some two or three went to Havana; Ricardo was one of these, where I found him last summer, after having made every other place

about the Gulf too hot to hold me. I found him ashore at the head of a pretty crew of twenty men, but he had no vessel and no money, and they kept themselves in employment as well as they could by robbing till they could seize some craft. Well, one day, about four, a score of us—nearly all of the old stamp and your friends, Master Theodore—were carousing in the old vault south of the Alameda, near where Lafitte was buried.

"Ricardo came in hot haste, followed by a stout negro, a stranger."

"News, my friends," said he. "We shall not be long without a deck beneath us!"

"We all rose to our feet excited by his words, and looked at him for an explanation. He then took his seat at the head of our board and filling his glass, cried, 'Let us drink to the health of 'El Mino del mar!'"

"You start; and so did two-thirds of us; for we knew that by that appellation, 'the child of the sea,' was meant 'Lafitte's Middy'—no other personage than yourself, master! We had not heard of you since his death, but had often spoken of you; and as your character and courage was so like Lafitte's we had more than once been wondering what had become of you, and wished that we had you for our chief! It would be like old times again, we said."

Theodore stood immovable as a statue. A ray of the moon fell upon his pale features on which was stamped an expression of the most painful interest. His emotion—his surprise—his unbounded astonishment, were too great for manifestation by outward signs. His features were as motionless as if chiseled in stone. His emotion was only betrayed by their deathlike pallor. Elliot did not seem to regard the effect he had produced, but, folding his arms across his breast, he continued:

"We all rose and drank it with a loud cheer, and then sat down. You see that you were kindly remembered, Master Theodore."

"Go on!" said Theodore, making an impatient gesture with his hand, while the blood almost spouted from his lip with its compression.

"After we had taken our seats again, Ricardo spoke. Said he, 'Comrades, I have given you this toast to feel your pulse touching Senor Theodore! You all, I see, remember him and with liking. You know he was a favorite of mine. I never saw a braver youth; though perhaps his heart was a little too tender where the senoritas were concerned. I don't think he had an enemy in the schooner, unless it is Red Knife here, who perhaps has by this time got over his wrath for being wounded in his right arm by him when he rescued the maiden Constanza from a grasp he laid upon her.'

"That's what he said, Master Theodore! and there is the scar of your dirk," added Elliot baring his left arm in the moonlight. "I have not forgotten it nor forgiven it," said he with a sinister smile; "but if you are not false to us in this matter we can yet be friends, master."

"Go on—let me know the whole extent of this matter. I pray you be brief of words."

"I told him I had no grudge against you and would be willing to show I hadn't if you was living by fighting out our quarrel in fair fight with knives."

"And for this then you have sought me," said Theodore, in a tone of contemptuous defiance. "If so, assassin, your wish shall be granted. I thank Heaven that gives me an opportunity of punishing a man so full of dark crimes and ridding the earth of a monster. Let this grave divide us and receive into its yawning jaws him who falls."

And the young man, drawing a dagger from his bosom, placed himself in an attitude of combat on one side of the grave.

"Not so fast, Master Theodore! You get ahead of my story," said Elliot, with provoking coolness. "I have no wish to destroy a good project by killing you or of not participating in it by being killed myself. I did not come from Havana here to fight out old grievances."

"Then what is your project?"

"If you will be patient, master, you shall learn," said Elliot, who had not moved from his position or even unfolded his arms.

If this man had wished to resent his old injury, he was too wary to meet Theodore in open contest, who was now no longer a boy of seventeen, but a young man of six feet in height and muscular and manly, and with a frame indicating great strength, and possessing as he well knew, a spirit withal of determined courage that knew no physical fear.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PIRATE'S DEMAND.

THEODORE with an effort suppressed his feelings, and replacing his dagger in his bosom, prepared to listen to a relation of events, whatever they were, in which he found himself so unexpectedly and dangerously involved.

"Says Ricardo to us, 'I suppose you will want to know what I mean by bringing up the remembrance of our 'Child of the Sea,' and what the toast I have given has to do with our having a deck beneath our feet.' We all listened attentively, which I am very glad to see you are

doing, master! 'This youth, Theodore,' says he, 'is now living, and is grown to be a tall, fine fellow, of twenty-one or thereabouts. I have just learned the fact from this negro, who ran away from the estate on which he lives—a man I once knew as a slave in New Orleans.'

"That slave's name?" demanded Theodore, quickly.

"Antonio—a fellow with the shoulder and breast of a bullock," answered Elliot.

"I know him—the villain!" said Theodore!

"He was flogged for insubordination a month since and fled. Well, proceed!"

"This negro," continued Ricardo, "informs me that our old friend Theodore is living with his master. Count D'Oyley, you will remember, commanded the frigate LE SULTAN, which captured us after we grounded and slew Lafitte, we escaping to the shore. He took Theodore, it seems, from some fancy or other, and adopted him instead of giving him to the yard-arm. He has been living with him ever since like a son, says the negro."

"And how did this slave, Antonio, identify me? How did he know I had ever been with Lafitte?" eagerly demanded Theodore.

"This Ricardo explained. He said the slave had often been to Barrataria to sell fruit to the outlaws, and had seen you there; and that when he came into Count D'Oyley's premises three or four months ago, by purchase from his former master, he at once recognized you."

"I can now understand some occurrences in his behavior that perplexed me," said Theodore, musingly. "I remember I saw him after he was punished, and he ground his teeth at me and said that for this the count and his family and I should yet suffer, though I knew nothing of his punishment till he had received it at the hands of the count's agent. I see now he meant to denounce me!"

"He found means to escape in a Spanish brig bound to Havana, four weeks ago," said Elliot. "He knew he could find some free rovers there, if anywhere, who would be very willing to pay a visit to your estate."

"The fiend!"

"Ricardo," continued Elliot, "then went on to say that, as you were found and were living in such prosperity, it was but fair and just that you should help your old friends in need. He asked our opinion, and we all gave our unanimous assent. Well, says he, I have formed a plan. We are now, in all, twenty-four good men and true, and two-thirds of us have served under the brave Lafitte, prince of buccaneers, whose like we shall never see again, unless his *protege* will take the ocean again. If he would, we could want no better leader. Trained under the immediate eye of Lafitte, he would make an excellent captain for us."

"Does this miscreant think me as depraved as himself?" muttered Theodore. "He is deceived, Elliot."

"That will be as it turns out."

"But supposing I should consent to join you—there is infamy in the mere thought—but suppose I should consent, what motive could Ricardo have for resigning his authority into my hands. By the holy mass!" he added, with bitter sarcasm, "he is better fitted than I for being the leader of such a set of cut-throats!"

"I will explain, if you will give me time, master. Ricardo went on to say that you must be sought out by some trusty member of the band and sounded. An'—"

"And you are this trusty person, selected by this jumbo of pirates to wait on me in my retirement," observed Theodore, with haughty scorn, surveying Elliot with a look of mingled contempt and disgust.

"In two words, I AM!" answered Elliot, drawing back a half step, for he did not like the flashing eye and threatening attitude of the indignant youth, who, seeking in retirement and in the friendship of the count and his family to forget the past, now found his sacred seclusion invaded, and become the object of some dark conspiracy of the bandits with whom his destiny had formerly connected him.

"I know not how to treat this daring insult upon my feelings and honor," he said with severity and menace. "My impulse is to hurl you into this grave and heap the dark dead upon your living body till you perish. Nay—I know not what restrains me from taking your life on the spot."

The pirate drew back, and displayed a long knife, which Theodore recognized as the same which had given him his sobriquet of "Red Knife."

"Put up your weapon," said Theodore; "I shall not stain my hands and conscience with your worthless life. You have seen me—you know my views—my present feelings. What have you more to say? You would sound me! Know then that I am no pirate! Circumstances known to you as well as Ricardo and his base crew threw me into the care of Captain Lafitte, who became my benefactor and friend. Educated by him, I was not depraved by his example; nor did he seek to stain my soul by leading me to commit crimes; but on the contrary he strove to keep me pure amid contamination! For this, and his unchanging

kindness to me I shall ever revere his memory. After his death, he committed me to the charge of the Count D'Oyley."

"To his own slayer!"

"Yes—for the count and Lafitte had recognized each other before the latter expired as—"

Here Theodore interrupted himself, and then added, "as former acquaintances. As the countess had received from me some services he received me into his family."

"That countess—that Spanish girl Constanza is then there, is she?" said Red Knife, nodding his head and pointing with his thumb in the direction of the villa. "She was a beauty! I'd like to see her again!"

"Villain," cried Theodore, seizing the man by the breast with a grasp of iron, "dare to speak of that lady again, and I will tear your foul tongue from your throat!"

"Stand back, Master Theodore! Release me, I say!" cried the man, struggling to get out his knife.

With a strong sign of detestation, the young man threw him backward, so that he reeled for several steps before he could recover his footing, with such good will had he hurled him from him. Instantly Elliot drew his knife, and with a savage exultation leaped upon him like a tiger. Theodore stepped quickly aside, and avoiding the vengeful blow, caught his arm and wrested the weapon from him.

"You are in my power, ruffian!" he said, elevating the knife for a moment above the man's bosom, and then casting it to the ground; "but it is not my wish to slay you. I would learn further of your purpose in coming hither. Go, pick up your knife, and be less ready with using it. You see I am your master!"

The man lowered his head, and muttering, picked up the knife and replaced it in his bosom. He had forgotten the great difference between the slender youth of seventeen, whom he once surpassed in physical strength, and the young man full grown; hence was to be attributed his audacious bearing at first, and his manner of addressing him as 'Master,' as if he was still a mere stripling. The strength and skill, as well as the cool courage exhibited by Theodore, came upon him wholly unexpected. He was surprised and confounded. Fear took the place of audacity, and respect and a sense of inferiority of impertinence. He respected Theodore because he felt that he had contempt for him; and men like him always feel a species of vile reverence for the superior who despises them. They may hate him, but they feel respect for him. Elliot's tone and bearing were at once changed, though the change was wholly external. It was the subdued ferocity of the bear, who, intimidated by repeated blows, fears to manifest longer any signs of rage. So that he treated him outwardly with civility, the young man did not care from what motive the difference proceeded.

"You have a ready hand, sir," said Elliot, speaking in a quiet, respectful manner, and forcing a laugh. "I thank you for not giving me the knife, when you could have done it. Your hand is quicker as well as stronger than it used to be, Master Theodore—I mean, sir. You are the very man for our captain—I wish I had your back before me, arm's length off, in a dark night, and Red Knife in my grasp!" he added to himself.

"You need not thank me for your life. I spared it to learn from you what your purpose is," said Theodore, haughtily, and in a very impatient tone.

"Well," answered Elliot, doggedly, "here it is, sir: I was sent by Ricardo and the rest, to visit you, as there was an English brig-of-war, the South Hound, in port, which had lost half a dozen of her men by the yellow fever, bound to the river, and which I could easily ship on board of, being an Englishman. I found no difficulty in getting a berth as you may know by seeing me here. My instructions were to see you, privately, and dog you till I could, and make you the three following propositions:

"First, to loan us, to purchase and arm a vessel, fifty thousand dollars, and yourself to remain forever after unmolested. Good sight drafts on New Orleans.

"Second, to return with me to Havana in the first merchantman going down the river, bringing twenty thousand dollars in specie, to buy a small craft, now lying for sale in Havana, and becoming our captain, with Ricardo first lieutenant.

"Third, in case of the refusal of either of these propositions, to be denounced by me to the captain of the brig as one of Lafitte's gang; to have the mansion of the count robbed and burned, and the countess carried off by the party that have sworn to do it if you refuse. If they wait a year for an opportunity to fulfill their vow."

"Have you ended, sir?"

"That is all," replied Elliot.

"Senor Ricardo and his friends are very modest; very. Now, whether to send them back with a specific refusal to each proposition, or to arrest you on the spot and hand you over to your captain as a pirate, I am wholly at a loss. What is your opinion, good Master Elliot?" he said with irony.

"I must confess, sir, we didn't calculate on

finding an honest man of you, and hoped you'd be willing to take to the sea again, and help us with a schooner, if we'd give you the command," answered Elliot, edging away, with his hand on the haft of his knife to defend himself.

"Well, you see what you have found me. Go back to Ricardo and his crew, and tell them that I treat with scorn and abhorrence their propositions, and defy them!"

"You are rich, sir. Twenty thousand dollars would not be felt by you; and it would place so many of your old comrades in the way of business."

"In the first place, I am not rich. I have nothing. I am dependent for even my clothing on the bounty of Count D'Oyley. I am an orphan and a beggar. This bounty I have received till I confess I am ashamed; and this very day was yearning to act for myself and shake off this yoke of dependencies," said the young man, for the moment forgetting that he was addressing so worthless an auditor.

"The count is rich as a Jew, they say. He could let you have any sum you wanted."

"And do you dare to ask me for money for the furtherance of piracy?"

"We are your old comrades, sir."

"A malediction upon my old comrades. Speak to me another word in behalf of your infamous project and I will have you arrested within the hour."

"I do not fear that, sir! Your own arrest would follow mine! The influence of the rich count could not avail! All he could say would only make your case worse in the eyes of General McDonald and Captain Stewart. I should swear you were an Englishman and my comrade and the Count D'Oyley would have to say he took you from Lafitte's vessel which he captured and burned; and instead of giving you up to justice let you remain with him. You dare not denounce me!"

"It is true I DARE NOT!" said Theodore painfully within himself. "These gentlemen would demand me as a British subject, for such I claim myself to be, and I should be tried for piracy. What excuse, what defense could I offer that the law would admit? Surely if my denunciation of this man would bring him to the gallows, his denunciation of me will bear equally upon myself! And the late piracies in the West Indies have made the British cruisers alert, and as they have never forgiven Lafitte's participation against them in the battle of New Orleans, they will show little leniency to any of his men that they may fall in with! This Elliot has risked his life to visit me! And on what fatal errand has he come! Ricardo, the daring, generous, yet deeply criminal Ricardo lives, and he would have me rejoin him! He knows me not! But why should I blame him, or even this villain, for their opinion of me? It is natural, think such minds, that I should again embrace my former career with a command that would put me in Lafitte's place. To their guilty minds it is a temptation that a youth would listen to with pleasure. But like them I became not a freebooter from love of crime. An evil destiny linked my fate with theirs; my heart never went with it! Well did the countess say to-night that an evil cloud hung around that brig-of-war! Evil indeed to me! I am in this man's power, and in that of his band! A score of pirates besides himself know that I am here, and if I should run risks to myself and denounce him, these would still live to molest my path."

"Elliot," he said, turning to the man who stood silently watching his countenance as if reading his thoughts, "I do not wish to arrest you. You are at liberty to go as you came."

"And what reply shall I make to Ricardo and my comrades?" asked Elliot, with that deference which had more recently marked his intercourse with Theodore.

"That, having left the sea at Lafitte's death and entered upon a different life, I have no disposition to rejoin my former companions, nor embrace a life of crime that I was led into only by circumstances beyond my individual control."

"You refuse then, senor, to send the fifty thousand dollars?"

"I am not worth a dollar in the world. If I had it, even, I should positively refuse to send a maravedi to such men as you represent and for such an object."

"You speak firmly, at least. The twenty thousand and the command, sir?"

"I am equally firm in my refusal, and I am deeply mortified that circumstances render it necessary for me to make a denial in so many words to propositions so infamous," he said, with a heightened glow that was plainly visible in the light of the moon that shone full upon the spot where they stood.

"And have you thought of the consequences, sir?" asked Elliot, with a significant inflection to the time in which he asked the question.

"Yes."

"Ricardo and his friends will not let you or yours rest until you have acceded to one or the other of the terms. Money he will have, and it is in your power, senor, to give it to us. The result of denial now will be my denunciation of you to the English captain, and the destruction

of the count's house and the captivity of his family!"

"For myself I fear not. You dare not denounce me, but at your own peril."

"I should be safe! I could first get Captain Stewart to give me a promise of protection if I would make known to him where a lieutenant of Lafitte was secreted, who hid himself in the country while he could get a vessel for sea!"

"Villain, would you thus lie?"

"He would promise me safety. You would be arrested."

"Too true," sighed Theodore. "But," he said very suddenly, and sternly, "how am I to give what I do not possess? And which did I possess, I repeat, I would not give! I heed not your threats. The count shall be put on his guard against any attempt of your party, and as for me I will thus protect myself!"

As he spoke, and before Elliot could anticipate the attack, he caught the pirate in his arms and threw him headlong into the deep open grave. As Elliot rose to his feet with his head just above the surface of the ground, Theodore stood over him with his drawn dagger.

"Assassin!" he cried in a low, deep tone, that told the man how strongly his feelings were wrought up, "a good Providence has opened this grave to receive you!"

"Mercy, Master Theodore. Spare my life, and I swear to be silent. I swear not to denounce you!" implored the man elevating his hands fearfully above his head to catch upon his arm any blow aimed at his life by the incensed and resolute young man.

"YOUR oath, Elliot," repeated Theodore, with incredulous scorn!

"But I will swear on the cross! I will kneel to you if you will spare my life. You can kill me here and I cannot resist. I will be your slave. I will be your dog, only let me live."

"Live!" said Theodore stepping back from the grave. "I should be degraded to stoop to take the life of a wretch so groveling! Come out and stand here while I talk with you."

The man succeeded with some difficulty in extricating himself from his horrid situation in the grave, reeking still with the stench of the corpse that had just been removed from it, and stood near Theodore, cowed and trembling; for his dreadful situation and imminent danger had unnerved him.

"Now listen to me. I do not trust you a hair's breadth. You fear me, and you will avenge yourself upon me when you can safely. My life is in your hands, but you shall not sacrifice me! Come with me to my house. I shall there imprison you safely until the brig sails. Then you shall go at liberty where you will. At the same time I also shall leave this place forever, so that any future schemes you and your associates may have with reference to me, will be futile. I shall make known, also, to the Comte D'Oyley as much of the information you have deposited with me in relation to your plans upon his property, as will induce him to dispose of it at a very early period, he being already in negotiation for its sale, with the intention in the spring of proceeding to Europe. Your return, therefore, to prosecute me and this mischief, will be of no avail, as none of your victims will be found. You see that I meet your plans with schemes quite as good as your own. And more, I wish to give your leader Ricardo and your companions to understand that I always go well armed, and that I shall not hesitate to kill on the spot any one of my former companions that approaches me with any intention whatever, in whatever land we may meet. You have now heard what I have to say. Give me that knife, with the handle of which in your bosom your fingers are playing, and then precede me toward the river."

Elliot hesitated to comply. He saw at once that all his schemes were likely to be defeated by the decision and resolution of the young man, whom he had hoped easily to win over to his views. He and Ricardo had cherished the hope that Theodore, whom they believed corrupt at heart, like themselves, would be prevailed upon to rob the count or forge his name and with the spoils, join them in their career of piracy. But Elliot saw with deep mortification and annoyance how greatly they had been deceived. His mission had utterly failed; and instead of having Theodore in his power through fear of exposure, he was himself his prisoner.

Reluctantly he gave up the knife; for a glance at the face and determined bearing of the young man into whose power he had fallen so singularly, told him it was no moment for deliberation.

"Now, sir, walk forward. The first attempt—the least motion to escape from me will be met with instant death."

As they started to leave the vicinity of the grave an object sparkling with exceeding luster in the fresh loam of the reopened grave arrested his eye; and picking it up he saw, with surprise, that it was a diamond brooch of great value. He thought it had been dropped by the pirate in their former struggle, and asked him if he had had a brooch. On his replying in the negative he thought it must have fallen from the bosom of one of the officers, and put it up to restore to the owner. They kept their way

down the narrow lawn of India trees toward the river, Elliot walking doggedly on before, followed about three yards behind by Theodore, with a step as determined as his purpose. On reaching the river-road, he saw the count's carriage was gone; but voices were heard by the water-side. He ascended the levee embankment, commanding Elliot to go up in advance, and saw the cutter just putting off with the body on board and the tall form of General McDonald standing at its head in the stern. Captain Stewart not finding room in it had gone with the count, who after looking round for Theodore and waiting for him a few moments, had driven on. The two now kept on their way in the open moonlight down the levee-road, with shady trees on the one hand and the broad shining river stretching away on the other. Elliot felt vexed as he walked on before his captor; to find himself in the power of one whom he had been in the habit of regarding as a mere stripling. His dark, ferocious, yet cowardly spirit was full of bitterness and rage. He ground his teeth and swore vengeance against him if he ever had an opportunity of avenging himself. After a walk of a mile and a half, during which not a word had been exchanged between them, they came to the gate of the lawn leading to the dwelling. There Theodore commanded him to stop.

"We are now near the house, Elliot; and I wish you to walk by my side as we approach it along these paths of the garden. Be assured that any attempt to leave my side will be the signal for your death."

"You are very severe on an old comrade," answered Elliot deprecatingly.

"No words! Accompany me! Walk nigher to me!"

They passed the tall, arched gateway and entered a winding graveled avenue that traversed the shrubbery ground. A portion of the way the close-set and overhanging trees, cast a darkness almost impenetrable. Through these gloomy passages Theodore grasped Elliot's arm with his left hand as they walked and held his own long curved knife within an inch of his breast. Thus in silence they traversed the grounds and emerged before the villa within a few paces of it. Guiding him around it to the rear, Theodore came to a low brick outhouse with a grated window and its door barred with iron.

"This is the lock-up for refractory slaves, Elliot," said Theodore to him in a quiet tone of voice. "The key I see is in the padlock. Remove the end of the bar on the bolt and enter."

Elliot obeyed in removing the padlock, but from the manner he grasped the iron bar with both hands it was plain he thought it was loose at both extremities and his intention was to fell his captor with it to the ground. But it was firmly clasped by a bolt at the other end and releasing it with a deep curse of disappointment, he opened the door and entered the cell.

"How long do you intend to detain me here, sir?" he asked with a tone of abject submission.

"Until the gun-brig sails," said Theodore, closing the thick oaken door and bolting it, and then passing the iron bar across it and locking the padlock into it. "You will find a bunk in one corner. It was last occupied by your friend the slave, Antonio."

The only reply he received as he left him was a growl of deperate vindictiveness.

"Louis," said Theodore, calling at the porch of a little cottage half hid in vines, which stood opposite the prison.

"Massa Theodore," answered a black, appearing at the door.

"I have locked up in the detention room a seaman belonging to the brig below, who is a bad man. See that none of the slaves approach him, nor do you hold any communication with him. See that he makes no effort to escape."

"Yes, massa," answered the African bowing low.

Theodore then left him and proceeding toward the house ascended to the veranda. From it the boat containing the coffin of Lord Clarence was visible descending the river, being some distance lower down than the villa. The brig-of-war was also distinctively visible in the almost noonday brilliancy of a southern moonlight, every spar delineated with accuracy to the eye.

"Where is the count?" he demanded of a servant who met him.

"He has driven down the river road, Master Theodore, to get opposite the brig."

"And the countess?"

"He took mistress in for a ride as he passed down."

"Then I will follow them in the boat," he said. "Where are the slaves—my crew? Summon them at once."

In a few minutes afterward Theodore was borne rapidly down the river in the direction of the armed vessel, seated in the stern of a beautiful six-oared cutter, pulled by six slaves in white turbans and trowsers.

CHAPTER XII.

BETRAYED.

The gun-brig's boat had already reached the side of the vessel, when Theodore got into his

own to descend the river. Captain Lennox stood in the gangway as the boat containing the body of Lord Clarence came alongside, with General McDonald standing bare-headed at the head of the coffin. At the same moment the count's carriage was seen to draw up opposite on the bank, and a boat was dispatched for Captain Stewart. By his invitation the count and countess also took a place in the boat, as he informed her that General McDonald's daughter was on board and would be happy to receive her.

General McDonald ascended to the deck and looking round, said, with emotion:

"Is all prepared for the reception of the body, Captain Lennox?"

"Yes, sir," answered Captain Lennox, a bluff, frank-looking, English sailor, with a well-bred air, but showing far more of the seaman than the courtier.

"And for the salute?"

"All ready, sir."

General McDonald cast his eyes round a moment upon the preparations within decks with a sad air. The moonlight poured down like a flood of silver, crossing the black-penciled shadows of the ropes, and displaying every object clearly to the eye. Beneath a canopy, formed of British colors, gracefully intertwined, and covering that portion of the deck immediately abaft the polished capstan, stood a spacious coffin partly concealed by a pall. It was of polished oak, and capable of containing the coffin which had been taken from the grave. Upon it was a silver plate engraved as follows:

EDWARD McDONALD,

EARL OF CLARENCE.

Born, January 8th, 1790. Died, January 8th, 1815.

Around the capstan, and the mainmast, with its crescents of pikes and pistols, black crape was entwined. All was solemn and funereal. Fore and aft on each side of the deck the crew, dressed in white with crape on their arms, arranged themselves, and on the verge of the quarter, at the head of the coffin, stood a young lady, her features partly concealed by a mourning veil, and near her a group of officers, their heads bare, with one of whom she was in low conversation, touching the rites going forward.

General McDonald now stood by the gangway and gave a slight gesture with his head. Instantly rose upon the air the deep roll of the muffled tenor-drum, mingled at intervals with the heavy, knell-like beat of the base-drum, and the subdued wailing of the fife. It was a march for the dead sailor. Slowly General McDonald descended again to the boat, where he was met by Captain Stewart. The two gentlemen, taking up the head of the coffin, assisted by four sailors, they bore it to the gangway. As they raised it from the stern of the boat, the roar of cannon discharging minute guns, mingled with the solemn march for the dead. The count and countess followed the coffin to the deck, along which it was borne with solemn step toward the canopy, and deposited within the outer coffin destined for its reception.

The lid was then closed, and a broadside discharged by the brig, closed this short but imposing ceremony. General McDonald then retired to the cabin, inviting the Count D'Oyley and his countess, who had already been presented to Emma McDonald by her father. Theodore, who had not reached the gun-brig in time to share in the rites paid to the dead, but arriving very near as the minute-guns began to fire, lay on his oars under the counter, not wishing to interrupt the ceremonies by going on board. After the broadside was fired, at which the slaves, unused to such a scene, cast themselves with terror into the bottom of the boat, he pulled to the gangway and ascended to the deck.

For an instant he paused, overcome with the reflection that he had been in action with that very vessel on board a pirate's craft. With a feeling half guilty and unassured, he experienced a sensation as if he was openly deceiving those who put confidence in him, and ought at once to retire from a vessel he was unworthy to enter. But the reflection that he was not accountable for his companionship with the outlaws, who had been at a former period his associates, he regained an honest and worthy confidence in his innocence, and firmly stepped upon the deck. Captain Stewart, who had not gone below with the rest, at once recognized him and advanced toward him with his hand extended.

"Ah, my dear sir, I am glad you have come on board. I regret sincerely you did not reach the brig in time to be present at the reception of the body."

"I came near as the ceremony commenced, and not wishing to interrupt it, lay on my oars until it was over."

"I am glad to see you. Your uncle, or father, is it? though he seems too young for THAT, was quite anxious about you, not seeing anything of you since we left the grave. Come and join us in the cabin."

On his entering the cabin, the countess and her husband both uttered an exclamation of

pleasure at seeing him, which, though a simple matter in itself, was a proof of their interest and affection.

"We thought we had lost you, Theodore," said the countess, smiling.

"What became of you at the grave, my son?" asked the count. "I thought you were following until we reached the water-side."

"I was detained," answered Theodore, blushing deeply as he spoke, and dropping his eyes before those of Emma McDonald, who, on his entrance into the cabin had started with an exclamation of surprise and womanly admiration, and under the spell of his presence, let her gaze rest unconsciously upon his face until the depression of his own eyes beneath her glance reminded him of the boldness of her regards. He instantly recovered himself from the confusion he had been thrown into by being so intensely regarded by a pair of the most brilliant eyes he had ever encountered, and added, taking the diamond brooch from his bosom: "I found there this diamond, which was possibly dropped by either General McDonald or Captain Stewart."

As he spoke he displayed the diamond to the sight of each of the gentlemen.

"It is not mine," said Captain Stewart.

"Nor have I lost a diamond," answered General McDonald; his gaze, however, instead of resting upon the gem held in the fingers of the young man, was fixed attentively and with the same earnest, half-recalling look, with which, it will be remembered, he regarded him when he first saw him.

"It is very strange," said the countess. "It is not the count's. Let me see it, Theodore."

"I found it in the loam which was thrown up from the grave. Its sparkling rays in the moonlight drew my attention."

He was about to hand it to the countess when General McDonald's eye was arrested and fixed by it.

"Pardon me, countess," he spoke, with great agitation; "but with your permission I will examine it more closely."

He took it from Theodore's hand, and after looking at it a moment, turned and surveyed the back of it. His countenance was instantly animated with an expression of recognition both pleasing and painful.

"It was my brother's! Behold the initials, 'M. McD.', and the crest of our house, a deer's antlers, about it!" he said, with sad emotion. "I recognized the setting. It was my poor brother's! I have often seen him wear it. How valuable will this be to his dear child."

"It must have fallen from the coffin into the soil, as the boards are loose and one of them, I saw, was split," remarked Captain Stewart.

General McDonald thanked Theodore for it with a great deal of feeling, and then, as if recollecting himself, he said:

"Pardon me, young gentleman; I should earlier have presented you to my daughter, Emma!"

Theodore bowed with an embarrassed air, without lifting his eyes to the lovely face of Miss McDonald. The maiden acknowledged his courteous salutation with a graceful motion of the head, without raising her eyelids. Both seemed constrained—both conscious and hesitating. Theodore could not account for his sensations of half-fear, half-happiness; she could not analyze the pleased, trembling emotions of her own bosom. Neither had met before, yet at once, before either had exchanged a word, there was awakened in their hearts a mutual feeling in reference to each other, which no other person had ever before caused.

We have described Theodore as a handsome, fine-formed young man of one and twenty, his appearance elegant, striking and commanding. His fine dark countenance was most prepossessing; and his address winning and inviting confidence. His eyes were large, black and brilliantly expressive, and his voice, in its low tones, music itself. Yet he had never known love. The nearest approach to this tender sentiment was his youthful attachment to the beautiful Constanza when a prisoner, now become his benefactress as the Countess D'Oyley. This regard had given a chivalrous elevation to his feelings even at that early age. But love had never taken possession of his bosom. In the retirement in which he dwelt he saw few females, and rather avoided their society than, like other youths, sought it. No face—no gaze of a maiden had, till that moment, moved his pulse and sent the blood into his handsome brown cheek. He stood before her, trembling, and wholly unable to define or understand his feelings. They were novel and strange, and were singularly compounded of timidity and joy.

Emma McDonald had been all her life also, till she saw Theodore enter the cabin, maiden-free! Till her eyes fell upon his face she had never seen a young man who had drawn from her more than a passing glance. It was his to move her being to its very depth, and to stir and agitate a bosom hitherto as unruffled as a summer sea. Beautiful exceedingly; high-born; intelligent; educated; full of imagination and feeling, and but twenty years of age. She had reigned admired in every circle. But she had

borne the character of a cold and haughty beauty, by those gentlemen who, themselves the idolized of fashion, and distinguished for their beauty of person, in vain essayed to make an impression upon her heart. What triumph then for our youthful hero! to move through the first glance of her eye upon him, the noble maiden hitherto insensible to the passion of crowded coteries. But to the impression he had made upon her heart he was a stranger, as well as she to the emotion she had caused in his bosom. If they had elevated their eyes on their introduction, they would have discovered the power each had so suddenly obtained over the other in one another's conscious faces.

There was one observer, however, whom the effect did not escape. This was the Countess Constanza. Her observing woman's eye detected in both the secret neither of the two would have confessed to themselves; and a smile of gratified feeling passed like sunshine across her lovely countenance.

"We should be happy to have you and your daughter, General McDonald, remain a few days with us," said the countess. "I will endeavor to render her visit agreeable; and the count will do his best to entertain you and other gentlemen of your suit."

"You are very kind," answered General McDonald, courteously, "but my mission here is of so sad a nature, that I must beg to be excused from any participation in social pleasures; else the hospitalities of a family I so much esteem would be gratefully accepted by me as by my daughter. It is, moreover, important that we should at once return, having so unexpectedly and with so little trouble performed our mission, to the Minerva frigate, which is under the necessity of making the best of its way to England, being destined for another service as soon as she reaches Portsmouth."

"It would give us great happiness to have you our guests," answered the count; "but, being a seaman myself, I know the importance that ships-of-war should lose no time in any service they may be upon."

"You were a captain in the French service, I believe, sir?" said Captain Stewart.

"Yes, sir. The last frigate I commanded was *Le Sultan*."

"That is the name of the ship that captured the notorious Lafitte," said General McDonald, "was it not?"

"I was just about to make the same remark," said Captain Stewart.

The count turned pale and with difficulty suppressed the feelings that this allusion—so unexpectedly exposed himself—awakened in him. Theodore, who was standing a little back from the group, near the door of the cabin, also started almost with an exclamation. His thoughts were upon Miss McDonald in bewildering confusion, while he dared not lift his eyes to her face where she sat opposite to him and not far distant, very industriously tracing out with her eyes the figure on the Turkish carpet of the cabin.

But at the question of General McDonald, he started. It was with an exclamation of painful regret. At the movement and sound, she raised her eyes to his face, with a look of surprised inquiry. His eyes encountered hers. With a look of touching distress—of the most exquisite suffering—he covered his face with his hands, and dropped his head upon his breast. The act was instantaneous as it was remarkable. He instantly reflected upon its strangeness; and removing his hands he lifted his face, and by her looks he saw he had been observed. Her glance, at first one of surprise, was now touching and full of pity. He felt its full force; and the consciousness of sympathy where but a moment before, his feelings had been of despair, came like balm upon his spirit.

His sudden emotion had not been so much at the question he heard as at the associations connected with it in reference to himself. He had been dwelling at the instant he heard it upon the happiness and pride of loving and being beloved by the fair creature before him. His heart was fast becoming filled with a gallery of beautiful and happy pictures in every one of which his fancy painted the form and face of the beautiful being in whose presence he stood. The name of "Lafitte," fell like a lightning stroke shivering all these bright visions, and he saw himself instead of the honored lover, the despised and condemned outlaw. This feeling rushed upon his heart and had drawn from him the exclamation which had attracted her attention to him. Her glance of commiseration melted his soul.

"But," thought he, "she pities me because she is good and I suffer! But if she knew the cause of my anguish that awakens her pity, how soon would she abhor me?"

The emotion of Theodore had not been observed by any other person present save the countess, who sympathized equally with him and her husband. The count's embarrassment had been remarked only by General McDonald, who attributed it to the sudden recollection of sanguinary conflict. At this moment Captain Lennox entered the cabin. As he passed Theodore, the latter at once recognized him. Instead

of giving way to the feelings awakened by this recognition he assumed a coolness that he was far from feeling; but he saw the necessity of being calm; and not by self-exposure, putting suspicion of his agency in the past into men's minds.

"Am I guilty then—am I a wretch like this Elliot, that I should thus hang my head? No! I will be free and open with innocence and integrity of character to sustain me. I am not unworthy—why then should I feel so? This lovely angel has pitied my anguish! Perhaps if she knew all she would not despise me! I will be firm."

His face manifested forth the resolution of his spirit. He stood up proud and calm. Miss McDonald was surprised at the sudden change in him, and wondered at it. Each moment she became more deeply interested in him. He filled her thoughts and caused her heart to beat with agitation.

"Shall we get under way to-night, gentlemen?" asked Captain Lennox. "The moon gives light enough to let her drift."

"We will be on deck in a moment and consult with you, Captain Lennox," answered General McDonald, "as I am at this moment interested in Count D'Oyley whom I desire to give me the particulars of his capture of the pirate, Lafitte. He commanded the frigate which captured him."

Captain Lennox bowed to the count, and said: "You did the sea service, sir, in taking that pirate. I remember bearing of your action and capture, as a very desperate affair."

"It was," answered the count briefly.

"He was a daring man, fearless, intelligent, and a rough seaman. I have reason to know that. Six years ago, last June, I was cruising to windward, in this very brig for the purpose of intercepting him; having learned that he was hovering between Kingston and St. Domingo. I had been cruising twenty days, when, one morning, the man aloft discovered a suspicious sail running in-shore, not far from Kingston. I ran in for her and soon made her out to be a very large armed schooner, rakish and taunt, answering the description of Lafitte's schooner, the *Gertrude*!"

"An unusual name for a pirate to give his vessel," remarked General McDonald.

"It is said he gave her the name in memory of some female he loved whose preference for another drove him to piracy."

"Are you ill, my lord count?" exclaimed General McDonald.

"No—it is past! a feeling—a sensation! It is gone away. Excuse me, messieurs!"

Theodore stood firm and rigid, suppressing every feeling. His face with the effect was stern. Miss McDonald, interested in the narrative of Captain Lennox and in the emotion of the count, did not observe it. The countess had risen to fly to her husband; but at an expressive look from him resented herself.

"He saw us and ran," continued Captain Lennox. "The wind was blowing a six-knot trader, and for that whole day we had a beautiful chase. We beat her before the wind, when she hauled and ran for the south side of Cuba. By great efforts and setting every pocket-handkerchief we had on board, I cut her off from the shore, and brought him to action after a chase of thirty leagues. Well, she crippled us as I was laying her to board, and beat us off and got clear. At one time we were within half pistol-shot, and I could distinctly see Lafitte on his quarter-deck. He had a way of curling his handsome mustache about his finger, and he was at his pastime whenever he stood still during the action, and I could see him distinctly with my glass. He was a devilish likely-looking fellow, not more than eight-and-forty, with a bold and dark countenance. His voice, when he gave orders to his men, rung like a trumpet. He wore a blue roundabout and white trowsers, and smoked a cigar the whole time. I never saw a fellow so cool. He worked his guns and his vessel with the most thorough seamanship, and his men seemed drilled to the most severe discipline. There stood by his side all the while, when he was not passing his orders forward to the crew, a slender, handsome youth about seventeen, as cool and fearless as his captain. Some of our men said it was a female in disguise; but his features were manly and bold, and I heard his voice which was that of a young man. He seemed quite as indifferent to the round-shot that were flying about his ears as Lafitte. It took us twenty-four hours to repair damages. You did the world service, Sir Count, in capturing him."

Count D'Oyley bowed. It would be difficult to detect the emotions that agitated Theodore's bosom during this recital. His previous resolution to remain firm, partly prevented him from betraying his participation in that scene so vividly described by the captain.

"Did you have much difficulty in effecting the capture of this desperado, Count D'Oyley?" inquired General McDonald, wholly unsuspecting of any connection between the count's recent emotion and the subject of conversation.

"I fell in with him off Havana, and chased him in toward the land. He ran for the port, but fell to leeward and grounded near the

shore. After a short action, I captured him and burned his vessel, his crew mostly leaping to the land."

"He fell by your sword, Monsieur Count?" observed Captain Stewart, interrogatively.

"Yes," answered the count, speaking with difficulty. "But, gentlemen, if I am moved by allusion to the subject, I beg you will excuse me," he added, with some impatience. "Its reminiscence is painful to me. At the time I captured Lafitte, he had received a pardon from the United States Government and had done with piracy. He was at the moment on his way to one of his rendezvous, for the honorable purpose of removing treasures he had deposited there and restoring them to their owners. In capturing him I prevented the fulfillment of this good intention, and, in treating him as a pirate, virtually did away the benefits resulting from the executive pardon. The death of Lafitte is, therefore, an event that will ever be regretted by me."

"Nay, nay, dear count," said General McDonald. "This feeling should not weigh with you. The pardon of the President of the United States could extend only to citizens of his Government."

"Lafitte was a native-born American."

"Therefore the pardon he received could only avail him while he remained within the jurisdiction of his President. It was not a pardon from any of the other Powers he had outraged by his piracies. When he fell into the hands of either of these Powers on the high seas, they were bound to treat him as an outlaw. You, in command of a French frigate, were so fortunate as to encounter and take him. You did right, Nay, to have done otherwise would have made you amenable to your Government, to the laws of those nations not a party to the pardon."

"Your argument is doubtless correct," answered Count D'Oyley, calmly.

"And so far from recognizing his pardon, the British Government had a greater reason to pursue him to extremity than any other nation, because his pardon was granted on condition that he turned his arms against British hearts. He was both our foe and an outlaw. In virtue of this pardon he fought in the battle of New Orleans against our arms. How do I know that my brother, Lord Clarence, who now lies on deck, did not receive his death-wound from this pardoned pirate's own hand? No, sir. England acknowledges no pardon of that nature. If fortune had not given him into your hands, the seas would have been swept by British cruisers to pursue and take him."

"At this moment," said Captain Stewart, "such is the resentment of the British Government against Lafitte's men, that there is still an existing proclamation offering a hundred pounds apiece for the head of every one that can be proved to have sailed with him."

At this extraordinary crisis of the conversation, all present were startled by a cry full of anguish and thrilling to the very soul. As they turned, Theodore was seen lying insensible upon the stairs of the cabin by which he had been standing.

CHAPTER XIII.

THEODORE'S CONFESSION.

THE effort made by Theodore, in the trying situation in which he found himself placed on board the brig, during a conversation in which he himself was so fatally interested, had been too much for him. The calm stern aspect of his countenance was but the index of an agitated bosom. And when the assertion made by Captain Stewart fell like a thunder-clap upon his ears, the anguish of his soul found vent in an irresistible outcry, and as he uttered it he sunk unnerved at the foot of the companionway.

The cry of anguish startled all present. Miss McDonald echoed it involuntarily, and with clasped hands remained fixed to her seat gazing upon him as he lay pale and almost insensible. The countess fled toward him and placing her hand upon his forehead, whispered: "Be calm, my Theodore! Be firm! This weakness may be fatal!"

He lifted his melancholy eyes to hers with an effort to smile by his gratitude. The count was also instantly by his side holding him by the hand. Both of these dear friends could from the bottom of their hearts sympathize with him. They felt for him as one with him!—They knew all he suffered. General McDonald and Captain Stewart looked on with surprise and anxiety. Captain Lennox had the moment before returned to his duties on deck.

"He should be bled," observed Captain Stewart. "Fortunately there is a surgeon's mate in the brig."

"No, messieurs," remarked the count quickly.

"He will soon be over it."

"It is the closeness of the cabin, perhaps," said Miss McDonald earnestly; betraying in the tone of her voice the deep interest she felt in him.

"He is not well of late," said the countess, catching joyfully at her words.

"Is your son subject to those attacks, sir?" asked General McDonald gazing upon Theodore who, perfectly conscious, was still unable to

move. His head rested on the arm of the countess who was applying a cruet of salts to his nostrils, and which Miss McDonald had thrust into her hand.

The count hesitated a moment how to reply. But seeing the necessity there was of turning aside suspicion, fearing that even his character and influence would not shield Theodore from the resentment of the English, should it be known he had been with Lafitte, he resolved to shield him at any sacrifice even of truth.

"He is, sir," he answered. "It is nothing alarming. He will soon recover. I regret that such an occurrence should have taken place in your presence, Miss McDonald, and yours, gentlemen."

"Make no apologies, monsieur," answered General McDonald. "He seems to be reviving."

Making a great mental effort, Theodore, with the assistance of the count, stood up. He was pale as marble. Miss McDonald surrendered her ottoman, warmly insisting that he should occupy it until he had quite recovered. He met her sympathizing looks, and returning her a faint, grateful smile, suffered the countess to conduct him to it. All the while the regards of General McDonald were fixed upon him with singular intensity—with an expression of one endeavoring to recollect a face.

"I owe you an apology for my foolishness," said Theodore, looking round upon them with a countenance frank and grateful, and, to the delight of the countess, who anxiously watched every motion of his features, wholly free from any of the emotion which she knew lay at his heart.

"Do not speak of it, sir," said Captain Stewart, cordially. "You still look very pale. Will you take a glass of wine?"

This Theodore declined; but Miss McDonald, with her own hands, filled a wine-glass, and presenting it, said, with a smile and a deep blush:

"You certainly will not refuse me, sir?"

He did not reply. He could not find words at will. But as he received the glass he raised his eyes to hers, and they spoke to her more eloquently than the tongue. How exquisite the happiness of that moment to him! He forgot in her presence that he had suffered—that he was—shall we say it—an outlaw! For such he was in the eye of the nations. Oh, how sweet was the consciousness that he was the object of the sympathy of one whom he felt he could love with all his being! And what strange, sweet happiness, flowed up into her heart from new and fresh fountains of her being. Sad and touching was the character of this new happiness, because she felt that he who had unsealed its sources was sad and sorrowful. Why so she knew not! But she was satisfied that there was a mystery. She recalled his former emotion and exclamation, and thought upon his recent singular conduct. The few whispered words of the countess had, moreover, reached her ears, and her manner, and that of the count, which she remarked as strange, impressed her irresistibly with the conviction that the young stranger's illness was produced by some cause wholly unconnected with physical suffering. And it was this conviction, with the discovery that the countess and count were plainly striving to conceal something, that prompted her with generous sympathy for them, to offer as a reason for his illness the heat of the cabin, which she knew it could not be, especially as Theodore was standing in the very entrance of it.

"There is some mystery—painful and distressing—at the bottom of all this," she said to herself; "it is a mystery between the three. It must be some terrible cause to produce such an effect. What could it possibly have been? Could it have been from the force of his own thoughts? What was said in conversation? They were talking about Lafitte. Let me recall! I can remember nothing that was said that could have produced this. Ah! perhaps he was in the attack with the count, his father, against the pirate, and lost a friend or brother, whom this conversation brought forcibly to mind. I can conceive nothing else. How noble-looking he is, and with what grateful tenderness mingled with gentlemanly courtesy he returned to me the glass. I see my poor heart is taken captive at last! but to one like him it would be a willing slave."

These reflections passed through her mind as she turned from him and placed the half-emptied wine-glass upon the marble buffet above the transom. Revived by the draught Theodore recovered all his self-possession. He encountered the eye of the countess, whose imploring, beseeching look confirmed his resolution. He saw that she was fully aware of his danger if he should be discovered; and that the count could not protect him from English justice.

"If I betray this secret," he said with a slight shudder, "I feel that I am lost. Infamy and perhaps a degrading death await me. I am innocent, it is true, but the stern eye of the law would see no difference between me and others—this Elliot for instance. On the contrary, having been a *protege* of Lafitte's, I should be suspected of being deeper dyed in crime—more skilled in piracy than his men would be. I

plainly see from the tone and language both of Captain Stewart and of Captain Lennox, that I have only to betray myself to be put under arrest. I did not suppose—I did not conceive that there still existed in the British Government the hostility that it seems remains against my late guilty benefactor, and, alas, against all associated with him. The secret lies not so much in the piracy of which they were guilty as in the fact of their having turned their arms against them. I was with Lafitte too, in the battle of New Orleans, as well as in his piracies. Before me lies infamy or honor. A repetition of the weakness of this past hour will assuredly bring upon me the former. Oh, God! that I, with every impulse to good—to virtue—to honor, should from a circumstance beyond my control, affecting my youthful years, tremble like the veriest wretch lest at any moment accident should brand my character with infamy."

These thoughts passed through his mind as he sat with the countess and count placed on either side encouraging him by their looks, the expression of which did not escape the observing eye of Miss McDonald who, deeply interested in Theodore, let nothing escape which could serve to unfold the mystery that she felt hung around him.

Hearing from the deck the momentary confusion that was caused in the cabin by the effects of the recent conversation upon Theodore, Captain Lennox had gone to the companion-way and looked down. Theodore's face was visibly by the light of the cabin lamp, as his head lay supported by the arm of the count, and as he gazed upon the pale outline, there was something in them that struck him as familiar. Instead of descending into the cabin, he remained gazing down upon his countenance and striving to recall where and when he had seen them. After several efforts of memory he was as far as at first from success; and Theodore had risen and removed to his seat on the sofa before he could form any conjecture.

"This is curious," he said to himself, as he turned away to walk the deck, and try to think it out; "somewhere I have seen that young count's face. But where or under what circumstances I find it impossible to recall. But that I have seen him before, and under interesting circumstances, I am as sure of as that I am on board the *Sieuth Hound*! How it haunts me. I shall not rest, I feel sure of that, till I ascertain. By heavens, I'll ask him, but that I find out. There comes the general and the captain of the *Minerva*. I hope they will conclude to lift anchor at once and let her drift into the current."

"Well, Lennox," said Captain Stewart, "what do you think about moving? There is no wind, I see, but she'll take the stream kindly by getting the boats ahead and towing her out into the middle of the river."

"Yes, sir. The current would take us down four knot."

"Is there no danger of being carried against the bank in any of these short bends of the river?" asked General McDonald.

"We can keep the boats out to pull her off and keep her well out, if there is any danger; besides, she steers like a swallow," answered Captain Lennox. "Unless you have some motive, gentlemen, in remaining longer, I should recommend moving down at once. We should float down as low as the marshes by morning. It is now but little past nine o'clock!" he added, looking at the watch in the binnacle.

"What do you say, general?"

"I should prefer, Captain Stewart, to go to-night."

"Then you had best heave the anchor up, Lennox," said Captain Stewart.

"But the gentleman and lady in the cabin! They will have to be put ashore in one of the boats first," said General McDonald.

"The young man came in his own barge," said Captain Stewart. "It lies alongside now, with six negroes for oarsmen. The count and lady can go off with him."

"I will then at once give orders to weigh," said Captain Lennox, turning to his first lieutenant, who was leaning over the larboard bulwarks smoking a cigar.

In a few moments all on board the brig was in motion. The windlass flew clattering round to the cheery heave-vo of the seamen, and the vessel rapidly walked up to her anchor. At the first order the count came on deck, and was met at the companion-way by General McDonald.

"Do not think, monsieur," he said, smiling, "that it is our intention to make you and your lady prisoners."

"You have decided then to start to-night," remarked the count.

"Yes—as our time is limited."

"We regret we could not entertain you as our guests for a few days," said the countess, also appearing on deck, and speaking with infinite grace.

"I assure you, madam," answered General McDonald, "that we are the losers by our refusal. What we have already experienced of your courtesy, has inspired us with a desire to know you and your husband better. I trust we shall meet again. If you visit England you

must promise to inform me; for then I shall make you my guests by hospitable coercion."

"We contemplate going abroad in the spring," said the count. "If we remain in England long enough to accept of your courtesy, we shall not fail to inform you of our being there."

"Your daughter, general, has deeply interested me, and to meet her again would afford me the greatest pleasure," said the countess. "How beautiful she is!"

"She is a sweet good creature, is Emma," answered the general, pleased at the praise bestowed upon his child. "She is a treasure and merits a crown instead of a coronet."

"And is she betrothed to any noble?" quickly asked the countess.

"No—not she! She loves me too well and herself too, the spoiled pet, to give her hand or heart to any one! I meant that though she would probably marry a coronet when she does wed, she OUGHT to have a prince."

"This is a sad mission she has accompanied you upon, sir," said the countess in a subdued tone, and slightly glancing toward the crape-wreathed canopy and pall, a few feet from which they were standing.

"Yes," answered General McDonald looking with a melancholy air toward the coffin. "It is of little consequence, madam, where sleep the brave. If they lie on the battle-field where they fall, perhaps that would be the most fit resting place, as my brother's were laid by his soldiers. But he left a daughter, Emma's cousin, a year and a few months her junior, and very like her, save Emma has blue eyes and her cousin's are as brown as a chestnut. This child has the last year so urgently and so often requested that her father's remains may be removed to England and be properly entombed, as became his rank and distinction as an officer, that I had the matter brought before Parliament and the result was the order which it is now my melancholy duty to fulfill."

"You were kind to yield to the orphan of Lord Clarence, sir."

"No," answered General McDonald, bluntly; "I was quite as anxious to have my brother lie in England as she could be. When I said that the best grave for a soldier was the battle-field, I spoke only a general sentiment. My brother Edward was very dear to me; and when I learned that he had fallen, and lay buried in an enemy's land, it was my first impulse to have his body at once conveyed to England. But being, myself, ordered on foreign service to Spain, I let things remain as they were, until his daughter, growing into womanhood, brought the subject once more before me."

"Such reverence for a father's memory is noble and praiseworthy."

"It is, madam. She too is noble and worthy."

"Why did she not accompany you and her cousin, Miss McDonald?"

"She is but eighteen and has not completed her tuition under governesses. Besides it would have been too painful to her."

"You have interested me in your niece. Shall I see her if I visit England?" asked the countess, smiling.

"Yes—if you come down to Northumberland, countess, otherwise no!" he said, assuming her tone and manner.

While this conversation was going on, Captain Stewart and the count were talking upon a subject connected with the French Marine, and upon the merits of a new kind of gun which had been introduced into it, but not yet used in the British service.

In the cabin, also, there was passing a conversation of at least equal interest to the parties themselves. With delicate tact the countess had left the cabin for the deck, directly after her husband. Left together, a conscious embarrassment gave to the cheeks of both a deeper tinge. Theodore cast down his eyes and felt his pulse beating faster and faster each moment. A sweet, pleasing sense of her presence filled his soul. She, also, dropped her eyes and seemed embarrassed as he was. But woman has always self-possession first. She felt the ludicrousness of two well-bred persons sitting alone together, looking desperately at the carpet, and laughed and spoke, while she cast upon him vividly her beautiful blue eyes.

"I have been introduced to you, Sir Cavalier Silent," she said, in a voice in richness of tone never surpassed; "but, methinks, your good father omitted to name the young gentleman I have the honor to address."

Her ease—her graceful animation—her native playfulness of word and manner, at once restored him to confidence and his usual address.

"In your presence one is excusable if he forgets his own name, much less that of another," he gallantly answered.

She saw there was a vein of deep earnestness beneath the compliment.

"I see you are bred a courtier," she said, blushing. "But you certainly have not forgotten your name," she added, laughing.

"It is Theodore."

"Ah—yes! I heard the countess, your beautiful mother, call you by that name. By the by, she is very youthful to be your mother, Sir

Theodore—Theodore what, pray? You give me your name in bits as children give away confectious."

"D'Oyley," he answered, hesitating. What other name knew he to give her in answer to her question?

"I knew they were the Count and Countess D'Oyley, for such my father introduced them; but I asked expecting you to give some other name; certainly concluding that both from his and her appearance you must be an adopted son."

Theodore could not help observing her countenance with the momentary suspicion that she knew the truth. But it was frank and ingenuous. It was natural she should suppose as she did.

"How did you suspect I was their son?" he asked, with interest.

"I heard the countess address you as such, when you—" Here she paused, looked at him embarrassed, and then added, "after you were taken ill."

Theodore saw at a glance, from her hesitation and manner, that she suspected his 'illness' involved some mystery. For an instant she believed she knew its true cause. But on reflection, he felt this could not be. "Besides," said he, "would she, believing me one of Lafitte's party, thus pleasantly converse with me, without any explanation? still it is evident she looks upon me as if interested in me beyond that which I fear! While she speaks—while she laughs—I can discern beneath her words and musical laughter, a concealed sadness!"

It was very true. Emma McDonald was a person of ardent feelings and impulses. She was generous and noble in character; and where she felt interested, her whole nature went with her enlisted feelings. She had from the first—at a glance—felt awakened in her bosom an interest in Theodore, no other person had ever the power to produce. Then his sadness—his anguish—his efforts to conceal some inward power of sorrow—and finally his outcry, charged with the tone of exquisite suffering—mental not bodily! the whispered words of the countess! the constrained air of the count; added to his being one of the handsomest and most interesting young men she had ever seen, all contributed to strengthen in her being, her first feeling of tender interest, till it partook of the most lively and touching character.

"The countess is not my mother," answered Theodore. "I am an orphan, and am, as you suspected, only their adopted child. But," he added, with tenderness and affectionate emotion, that elevated his heart high in her opinion—already full partial, "she is to me all a mother—all a sister could be! I can never repay their goodness and love."

The feeling with which he uttered this, gave a new interest to his countenance. It deepened in her bosom the interest she felt for him.

"You are not then a Frenchman," she said earnestly; "you speak English without any foreign accent."

"No, lady, I am I believe an Englishman."

"An Englishman! my countryman," she repeated with manifest pleasure, and a glow enriching her cheek.

"I believe so," he said sadly.

"Believe? Do you not know then?"

"No, Miss McDonald. There is an uncertainty involving the past in relation to my birth-land and even my parents, that casts a gloom over all my life."

On hearing these words, she regarded him for one instant with deep sympathy mingled with surprise and curiosity. The melancholy tone in which he spoke, the gentle sadness that fell over his countenance, made her feel sad in turn. Tears came irresistibly to her eyes, and she dropped them and strove to crush them beneath the lids ere they gushed forth and he should see them. But he discovered her emotion, and from her bright tears a light was reflected upon his heart like summer sunshine. It was as if a star had shone out amid the storms upon the mariner's eye. He knew that her tears were with him in his sorrow; and this sweet consciousness communicated to his whole being a happiness so exquisite that he could have answered her tears with tears.

"Miss McDonald," he said taking her hand, which trembled in his grasp, but was not withdrawn, "your interest in me—an orphan—an unknown! moves me deeply. Accept my gratitude. Receive all that my heart has to offer in return!"

He pressed her hand upon his heart as he spoke, with an action at once so graceful, and so full of respect and tenderness, and then releasing it, that the most fastidious maiden could not have been offended. It was the eloquent yet of sudden, deep, natural emotion. Emma McDonald was far from taking offense. The pulsations of her heart vibrated like the chords of a harp, giving out music when the tones of another instrument sweep by in the air. The throbbing of his heart had communicated, as it were, to her hand, giving harmony of feeling with him to her whole being. She held her eyes downward. Her temples glowed with rich blood, while her bosom heaved and her whole form was moved with the effect of feelings new

and delightful. One idea filled her soul! She felt that she loved, and, perhaps, was beloved! Happy thought! exquisite consciousness to her who has first experienced the sensation—a sensation that seems to her to be born rather of heaven than of earth!

Love hath a language that love only can interpret! Theodore for a moment conceived that he had given displeasure by his act. But a second glance at her face—at her emotion, tender, not resentful, partly reassured him.

"Pardon me, Miss McDonald," he said, between joy and timidity, "if I have been so unfortunate as to offend you."

"You have not offended me," she said in a low tone without raising her eyes. The music of her voice thrilled to his soul.

He gazed steadily upon her with a look of the most tender interest—of the profoundest reverence that love ever regarded the idol of his worship. At this instant her eyes were upraised irresistibly. Their glances encountered! their souls met! and both read the secret of each other's hearts. The hand he had released was again raised, and this time pressed to his lips. At this crisis the step of some one descending into the cabin, caused them both to assume, instinctively, an air of indifference. It was the countess. The very effort to conceal betrayed them. Their cold and indifferent manner was too formal to be natural, and through this the countess at once discovered that there had been passages of the heart and feelings between them! This conviction gave her joy. She knew that Theodore was in himself worthy of any woman's love; and she felt that to have his heart interested in so lovely a person as Miss McDonald would draw him out from himself and his sad thoughts!

"I have come down to take leave of you, my dear Miss McDonald," said the countess extending her hand with peculiar grace and frankness.

"And are you going so soon?" she asked, half-turning toward Theodore, and then checking her look to fix it on the face of the countess.

"The brig is already getting under way, and will in a few moments descend the river. I trust, my dear Theodore, that you are quite recovered."

"Oh, quite, my dearest mother," he answered, regarding Miss McDonald with an expression of perfect happiness.

The count and General McDonald now reappeared, the former to take leave of Miss McDonald.

"I trust, sir, you are better," said General McDonald, with much courtesy mingled in his affectionate inquiry.

"I feel perfectly well, sir," answered Theodore; "and extremely regret that I should have been the cause of anxiety to any one present." His glance involuntarily sought that of the daughter.

"The brig is now in motion, sir, and we should be happy to have you remain on board a mile or two," continued the general.

"The current is very strong to pull back against, sir, and my mother, the countess, may endanger her health by remaining out late upon the water."

"I hope we shall meet again, sir."

"It would afford me the highest happiness, to have the privilege," said Theodore, warmly.

While he was conversing with him, General McDonald did not once take his gaze from his face which he was scanning with the closest observation. He suddenly addressed him:

"Have you ever been in England, young gentleman? Pardon me the abruptness of my inquiry."

"Not since I was a child, sir," answered Theodore, hesitatingly completing the sentence.

General McDonald regarded him a moment attentively, and then shook his head and turned away with a very thoughtful expression of countenance.

The count and countess now took leave of Miss McDonald, who accompanied them to the dock. The anchor was already up, and the boat's crews were ahead in the first and second cutter, pulling her out into the stream. Declining the renewed invitation of the general and Captain Stewart to remain on board, the former assisted the countess into the boat alongside, and the count shaking hands with Captain Stewart followed. Theodore lingered a moment by the funeral canopy. It was to take leave of Miss McDonald. His hand held hers for an instant.

"Farewell. Shall I be remembered?" he said, in a low, trembling tone.

"Do not ask me," she said, with feeling.

"We must meet again!"

"Do you desire it?"

"Yes—oh, indeed, yes!" she answered, fervently.

"Then we shall shortly see each other. I shall visit England!" he said, with a smile full of hope.

"Soon?"

"In a few weeks, if possible."

"You will not forget me?" she cried, with singular earnestness.

"I can forget you only with the oblivion of my being."

Their hands lingered in the farewell that both now uttered in a tone of painful earnestness, and the next moment Miss McDonald turned away and descended into the cabin; while Theodore, with a heart full of grief and joy mingled, hastened to the gangway to get into the boat, which was waiting alongside.

As Theodore placed his hand upon the polished head of the brass stanchion, to which the man-rope was attached, he felt a slight touch upon the wrist. It was the captain of the gun-brig.

"Excuse me, sir," he said bluntly, yet with respect, "but you will relieve my mind of great perplexity by telling me where we have met before. For the life of me I can't make out your signals, though I am confident we have sailed in company at some time or other."

The clear light of the moon, which illuminated the deck of the brig, fell upon the brown, weather-beaten features of the British sea-officer, and Theodore fully recognized him as the captain in command of the Sleuth Hound in her action with the Gertrude. He did not tremble. He did not change countenance. He had anticipated possible recognition, and had nerved himself for it. His love—the recollection of her he had just taken leave of, made him resolute and self-possessed. With a calm and dignified manner and a courteous smile, he replied:

"Possibly, monsieur may have met me in Cuba."

"That may be. But when or where is the puzzle."

But he received no further reply. Directly on answering, Theodore had waved his hand to him, and with a bow, as if nothing more was expected from him, stepped into the boat. General McDonald, who still stood in the boat, shook him by the hand as he was leaving it, and said:

"Can you tell me if we have ever met before to-night?"

"Not that I am aware, sir," answered Theodore, with surprise.

"Then I can't account for it," he said, as if to his own thoughts.

Amid the farewell wishes of the officers on deck, the barge of the count shot away from the brig's side, and moved rapidly toward the point where his carriage stood in waiting, while the brig with her boats glided with slow motion from the anchorage toward the middle of the broad, shining river.

"Did you hear that question of General McDonald, countess?" asked Theodore.

"I was just musing upon it. I have seen him regard you stealthily to-night several times."

"This has not escaped me," said the count.

"And what can you suppose is the cause?" asked Theodore with earnestness.

"That he has seen some one who strikingly resembles you," answered the countess.

"Perhaps," exclaimed Theodore, eagerly, half rising from his seat, "perhaps my father! or a brother! Why did I not ask him?"

"Do not be sanguine, Theodore. It is barely possible that he may have seen some relation of your blood—don't leap from the boat!—whom you resemble. But you may also look like some one he has seen who is in no way connected with you. You should hang no hope on a question like that!"

"You still believe, my friends, more than you speak out," answered Theodore with emotion.

"You fear to encourage me in my wishes and hopes in this matter, lest I should fall back broken down by disappointment!"

"I must confess, dear Theodore," said the countess, "I did hope for a moment; but I feel on reflection, there is no ground for it."

"I wish the question of the captain of the brig had no meaning deeper than that of the general, if I must give up the expectation I was about to fix upon his inquiry. He recognized me as I was leaving the brig."

The count and countess both started with exclamations of surprise.

"He asked me when I came over the side, where we had met, as it puzzled him to recollect."

"What danger!" cried the countess. "Alphonse, urge on the rowers to the utmost speed, that we may reach the carriage! He may recollect and pursue. What reply did you give him?"

"That perhaps we had met in Cuba; and without waiting for any further questioning I got into the boat; when General McDonald put the same question to me."

"Oh, my dear friend! my son! what peril has surrounded you to-night," exclaimed the countess. "While Captain Lennox was so loudly and indignantly relating his story of an engagement with Lafitte, and described you, I trembled so that I nearly lost my self-possession!"

"He has, then, not recognized you fully?" asked the count with interest.

"No, he recollects my countenance as I do his. He cannot tell when he has met me!"

"May he never recollect," prayed the countess clasping her hands and looking fervently upward.

"Bend to your oars," said the count, living

the order in a low, energetic tone, "make the boat fly through the water!"

"There is no fear now," said Theodore.

"It is best to be safe! Once ashore and in the carriage you are beyond pursuit, as they can only chase in boats. Thank God! we are clear of the brig without any discovery being made on board!"

"And do you think they would have detained him and taken him from your protection?" asked the countess impassionately.

"My influence I fear would have been little. I am no longer holding an influential command; and besides I am a French-American, a national combination sufficiently distasteful to Englishmen. Such is the hostility of the British to Lafitte and his scattered adherents, that Theodore would not have any hearing."

"But you would have told them his story."

"And there would have been no plea in his behalf. They would answer that every man might make it. The fact that he had been with Lafitte would have been in their eyes sufficient to condemn him, and justify them in arresting him."

"On American soil?"

"An 'outlaw,' as they would regard Theodore, has no privilege of country. He may be taken anywhere."

"What have we not escaped!" exclaimed the countess, almost overcome. "But General McDonald would not have consented to such a breach of hospitality! we went on board as guests! He would have interfered to prevent such fearful outrage!"

"He could only protest, if inclined to do so! He could have no power, if the two captains chose to act."

"Theodore, I'm glad you are so calm," said the countess, taking his hand.

He smiled and kissed it, and replied:

"I have surveyed my position in every light, dear countess, and know all its danger! I have suffered all I can suffer in connection with my peculiar situation! Be assured, that, for the future, conscious of innocence, I shall not betray myself, as if I am in truth guilty. My safety, my happiness, my honor depend on my calmness."

"How were you pleased with Miss McDonald?" asked the count.

Theodore made one or two attempts to say something in warm and glowing terms; but, as if finding words wholly inadequate to express what came from his heart to his lips he blushed deeply and said with a very embarrassed air:

"What did you ask, sir?"

"How beautiful is it to be on the water by moonlight," said the countess, interposing in Theodore's behalf, whose embarrassment she understood. "See how firmly the dark lines of forest trees border the shining river—like a frame of ebony to a gigantic mirror. And there stands the carriage. Now, Theodore, you are safe. I have been nervously watching the brig to see if a boat did not come from her this way. But now you are in security."

The next moment the barge shot into the dark, almost black, shadows of the river-bank, and the party alighted. Theodore would have remained in the boat till it was pulled up to its usual ground nearly opposite the villa, but to this they both objected; and, getting into the phaeton with them, they rode to the house along the river-bank, while the slaves pulled up by the shore. As they reached their dwelling and ascended the veranda, they had a fine view of the gun-brig a mile below in mid-river, floating down with the current. Her topgallantsails, jib and trisails were set and sharp-braced to steady her, though no wind was stirring. The boats were alongside, and Theodore could see with his glass, which a slave brought to him, that two of them were hoisted up. They watched the brig until a bend of the river took her from their sight, when the count retired to the drawing-room, desiring them also to come in, as it was then past eleven.

"In one minute, Alphonse," said Constanza. "Theodore," she added, taking him by the hand, "let not either of us forget devoutly to thank God for your escape to-night. Strive to be unconcerned ever after this, when Lafitte's dreaded name is mentioned."

"Be under no apprehension of me, dearest countess. I shall not betray myself. I should not have done so to-night but for—"

"I understand you. You were thinking of Miss McDonald with tenderness at the time, and the consciousness that your connection with Lafitte might bar forever the hopes of happiness of which she was the center overwhelmed you with grief."

"And do you read thoughts?" he asked, with surprise.

"When they are written on the face of those in whom I am interested."

"Then you know all I would have concealed?"

"And why conceal it from me, Theodore?"

"I hardly dare confess it to myself."

"She is a noble, disinterested girl. I read all her heart in her fine expression."

"And that heart read how, dearest countess?" asked Theodore, with trembling eagerness.

"With language of the most glowing tenderness and womanly interest in you."

"Oh, could I believe it!"

"Do you not?" said the countess, smiling archly.

He pressed her hand and blushing returned the smile.

"And yet this consciousness," he said, sadly, "renders me miserable, at the same time that it renders me happy. I feel that I never shall be to her dearer than I have been this night."

"Do not despair. She returns to England after a brief delay in Havana. In a few months we shall be in England. I have promised General McDonald to visit him. You will then see her."

"And I have learned a circumstance to-night, that will, perhaps, induce the count to go abroad sooner than the spring."

"And this circumstance, what is it, Theodore?" hastily demanded the count, who had returned to the veranda to call them in from the night air.

"It is something evil," said the countess, in an alarmed voice, struck by the manner in which Theodore had spoken.

"I thought I would defer mentioning it at present; but I will do so now!" answered Theodore. "There came in this brig a man who was formerly on board the Gertrude. He was at the grave during the exhumation of the body of the Earl of Clarence, and there recognized me as I had previously done him. After the procession left, as I was about to follow you, he detained me by the arm. It was in vain for me to profess ignorance of him. I had to acknowledge that I knew him. He then told me that a band was organized at Havana under Ricardo, whom you will remember, countess, was Lafitte's lieutenant; that they wanted a vessel, and hearing from the slave Antonio, who it seems knew me here, and who found his way to Havana, that I was with you and apparently rich, this fellow, whose name is Elliot, was dispatched in this vessel in which he shipped as a seaman to visit me and to propose to me to either join with money, or send them money on pain of exposure."

"This is dreadful," exclaimed the countess, turning pale.

"Infamous," cried the count, with indignant surprise. "It is very extraordinary! This man detained you then at the grave?"

"Yes."

"And what did you do with him? You did not let him depart unpunished! You should have exposed him to the officers of the brig."

"I threatened to do so, but he menaced me with the same, and I felt that I was, so far, in his power. He knew it; for he was sufficiently impudent."

"Better have given him the money he wanted," cried the countess.

"And so encourage piracy. You forget, my dear Constanza," said the count.

"After a warm conversation, hard words were interchanged. On my positive refusal, he drew his knife on me and I threw him into the open grave. This tamed him and I took him prisoner."

"Admirable! what did you do with him?" asked the count, with animation.

"I should not have troubled you with this history at all, but the villain said that in case of refusal, my life should not only be sought by the gang, but that they had bound themselves by oath to burn your villa and devastate your plantation. This word I know they will keep. My wish is, therefore, dear count, that you would dispose of your estate without delay, and in the meanwhile, reside in New Orleans with the countess."

"This shall be done. I can close the bargain with M. Moret in two days. We will then pass the winter in the city, and early in the spring proceed north, and take passage for Europe from one of the Atlantic ports. In this manner we shall defeat them wholly! There seems, Theodore, no end to your destiny as touching your unfortunate connection with my poor brother," added Count D'Oyley, with emotion.

"Let us leave to-morrow," said the countess, earnestly.

"In three days at the furthest. There can be no danger until this Elliot returns to report to his comrades at Havana! And this you did not let him do, Theodore?" said the count, very pointedly.

"No, I made him precede me down the levee road until I reached the grounds, through which I conducted him by the arm, with his own knife drawn, in my hand, pointed at his heart. I led him to the lock-up, and there fastened him securely in. I then took the barge and followed you on board the brig."

"And he has been there confined all the while!" cried the count. "He then is in our power, and you are safe!"

"If you should give him up to the authorities, his arrest would surely bring upon us the vengeance of his comrades," said the countess; "and besides he would denounce Theodore."

"This is true. For him to be suspected even, will never answer," said the count gravely. "My dear Constanza, it is time you should retire. Be assured that such measures will be

taken by Theodore and myself as will prevent any ill consequences arising from this perilous visit."

The countess with a heavy heart and a mind filled with fear and forebodings, returned within the villa, while the count taking a sword beneath his arm, accompanied by Theodore, descended the steps of the veranda, and proceeded in the direction of the lock-up. The count's features were stern and determined. Their expression was almost fierce—those of Theodore calm but resolute.

"Have you the key?" asked the count in a voice that Theodore thought could not belong to him.

"Yes, it is here. Have you decided what is best to do with him, consistent with our safety?"

"Yes," answered the count in a deep voice. "I will not slay him, for I do not desire his blood on my hands."

"What would you do. We may detain him here in prison as long as we please!"

"Nor that! He shall live and he shall go free. But he shall never have the power of injuring you!" answered the count fiercely. "I shall cut off the fingers of both his hands! I shall cut out his tongue!"

"Can it be possible such is your purpose?"

"Yes. He shall never utter with his tongue—he shall never write with a pen, words to degrade you!"

The count unlocked the door, when the pirate sprung clear forth into the moonlight and fled like a deer. Theodore sprung after him.

With an exertion the count recovered himself and grasping his sword followed after Theodore who instantly pursued the fugitive. But when he had gone a few steps the count stopped suddenly and turned aside to the door of the negro hut opposite the lock-up, letting Theodore continue on alone. With a stroke of his heel he dashed the door in, calling "Paul!" A tall negro sprung from a low couch and stood before him.

"Your dogs Fang and Wolf! Loose them! Are they in the kennel?" he demanded quickly.

"Yes, master!" answered the surprised and submissive slave. At the same moment a young African stripling of eighteen years made his appearance from the inner cabin.

"Louis," he cried to the young slave, "to the stables and saddle my hunter! Fly for your life." The lad bounded from the hut. "Are the dogs coupled and muzzled?" he demanded, following Paul to the kennel in the rear of the cabin.

"Yes, master," answered the negro.

"Have you fed them to-night?"

"They had a bone apiece for supper."

"They are hungry then. So much the better! They howl savagely enough! Give light here!"

The negro threw open a door through which the moonlight streamed into a bamboo shed, on one side of which was a portico in which two dogs were chained. On their entrance the dogs howled in a low fierce note, which was hushed by a word from the negro as he threw open the door.

"Bring them outside through the cabin," said the count. The slave unlocked the chain which held them to a bolt and followed the count to the front of the cabin. The dogs came in silence and submissive, their ferocity for the moment quelled by the influence held over them by their keeper.

As they were brought into the full moonlight their true character and proportions were seen. They were gigantic bloodhounds of the most ferocious and sanguinary species. Their color was a dark or sallow yellow, and their limbs heavy but remarkable for their tiger-like pliancy. Their aspect was fierce and brutal in a degree seldom remarked in beasts, that are by nature wild and ferocious. As they stood coupled in a heavy chain by the side of the tall muscular African, they began to open their huge mouths and savagely to yawn, snuffing the air and displaying their glittering fangs; and then whining they would scent the earth about them and pull at their chain impatiently.

"Will they be true, Paul?" asked the count.

"They neber say die, master!"

"Well. Lead them to the door of the lock-up! That is well! Now take them in and give them their scent. Have they got it? Do they know what is wanted of them?" demanded the count impatiently.

"Do you hear dem low howls, master?"

"Yes."

"Dat is how dey say dey know what is wanted ob'em! Dey got de scent now! Dey neber yell dat way for nothing!"

"Then uncouple them and let them follow it!"

"Master, please come inside here first so dey won't cross your scent!"

The count, well knowing the nature of the dogs, entered the lock-up and instantly the negro uncoupled them. Previously having fastened upon the scent of the last occupant, they no sooner were released than they rushed together out of the door and went off upon the track of the fugitive like the wind without giving mouth. There was something fearful in the fleetness and perfect silence with which they

moved off together on the unerring and fatal mission upon which the count dispatched them. In a few seconds after they had disappeared the negro brought up his hunter. He mounted him at a bound and followed at full speed by the two slaves he took the course just pursued by the bloodhounds.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHASED BY BLOODHOUNDS.

WHEN the count, with the full determination to hunt the fugitive buccaneer to death, started in pursuit, the bloodhounds taking the lead, Red Knife had full six minutes' advantage, this time being consumed by Count D'Oyley in getting the dogs upon the scent and obtaining his horse. He, however, did not feel solicitous as to the result, well knowing he could not escape the unerring dogs.

Finding himself fairly free from his prison, Elliot had taken the first path which opened before him. This was the carriage avenue, leading round the north wing of the villa, and after winding through the ornamental grounds, passing by an arched gateway into the river-road. The pirate was of a slight sinewy frame, though remarkably broad and heavy across the shoulders, between which his head seemed to sink, or crouch. But his limbs were light and wiry, and he was well built for running. He felt that he fled, also, for his life, and fear gave him wings. He bounded like a hare along the avenue, seeming scarcely to touch the ground. Theodore soon lost sight of him in a turn of the path, but came again in view of him as he reached the gate, over which he threw himself with the ease of a circus-rider. On reaching the arch, Theodore saw him by the bright moon which revealed every object, far down the road. The gate presented as slight an obstacle to him as it had done to the buccaneer, and with an active speed that promised to match that of the fugitive, he pursued him down the road. Elliot looked round, as he flew, and seeing Theodore leap the gate, he cast his jacket aside, kicked his shoes from his feet, and darted onward. On one side of him was a hedge, bordering the vast sugar-fields, which stretched a mile deep toward the forest, that itself was a vast swamp. On his right, between the road and the shining river, ran parallel the levee; an embankment of earth about as high as the tops of carriages, constructed to protect the road and sugar-fields from the rise of the river. The embankment was green, inclined like a glacis, and on the top broad enough for six men to walk abreast. Fearing some surprise from the hedge, and wishing to see his way clearer, Elliot soon left the road for the top of the levee, along which he flew like a hunted deer, full in sight of his pursuer.

His countenance, as he ran, was ferocious, yet pale with fear. At intervals he would turn and take a half-look behind, when seeing Theodore within a hundred rods of him, and apparently gaining upon him, he would gnash his teeth.

"A knife! oh, that I had but a knife! He is but one, and I would let him come up! Curses light on him!" he muttered, as the gleam of his own knife in his pursuer's hand flashed upon his side-glance. Feeling his wind giving, he watched an opportunity and caught up as he fled, a short stick, which he twisted into the waistband of his pantaloons and turned round like a tourniquet bracing himself up with renewed energy. The effect of this assistance was soon evident. He left Theodore far behind.

"I shall escape him! He alone is in pursuit! The French count has given it up! But where shall I keep on to? Ah, *sacré!* he gains upon me! I must double, turn, and conceal myself! There are forests and swamps to the right; I will turn down that lane by the grove and stretch away toward the thicket. There I'm safe. Devils; how he gains upon me!"

Theodore had adopted precisely the same plan pursued by the pirate, using the dagger, however, for a tourniquet. This, Elliot, at a second glance over his shoulder, saw. He reflected that a brace so fastened was not rapidly removed, and satisfied of this, he determined how to act.

"Now then, I have him! I will risk it," he said with a glance of savage joy.

The next moment he threw himself forward headlong, upon the path. Believing that he had stumbled, Theodore bounded forward, trying to disengage the knife as he ran. But he came upon the pirate ere he had done so, when with a ferocious cry Elliot sprang from the earth and grappled with him.

Theodore released his unsuccessful grasp upon the knife to defend his throat, which the pirate tried to seize. For a moment the struggle was one of physical strength. Elliot fell and Theodore above him. But the grasp of the former was upon the handle of the knife which with a great effort he drew forth and with it aimed a blow upward at the heart of the young man. Theodore caught his arm, and the contest was now for the possession of the weapon! In the struggle both rose to their feet and Elliot threw the knife far from him into the river. During the conflict neither had spoken a word. Only the low, growling imprecations of the buccaneer could be heard above the tramp of their feet.

As he cast away the knife his back was turned toward the road down which he had come, but Theodore's face was in that direction. His eyes had been all along in expectation of the count. But at this moment they rested on two dark objects that at that instant leaped into the road over the white gate of the avenue.

"Elliot," he said, in a tone that made the man start with strange fear: "your fate, wretch, is sealed. Your punishment is to be more fearful than any I can inflict." And releasing his grasp upon him, he pointed up the road.

The buccaneer looked in the direction he indicated, and saw coming along the middle of the road with noiseless celerity two dark objects. As he looked, they turned out of the road, and taking the levee, came on swiftly and steadily.

"God have mercy! They are not bloodhounds, Master Theodore?"

"They are, Elliot. The count has loosed them," answered Theodore, casting a look of commiseration upon him.

The buccaneer uttered a piercing cry, gave a wild, terrified glance of intense horror toward them as they came sweeping along the path with their heads dropped close to the earth, and then bounded away in fresh flight. The speed at which he went seemed to Theodore as almost supernatural. His body and head stretched outward so far, and low near the ground as he ran that he had more the appearance of a bear in flight than a man.

"Poor wretch! God have mercy on him, indeed," said Theodore; "well, it is better to perish thus than by my hand. What a horrible fate is before him. I would avert it—I would save him if I could. But one might as well turn the lightning, by a word, from the track as these Cuban bloodhounds. I have fears even for myself, if they have not taken the scent at the outset properly. Here they are upon me. I must await the issue calmly. How fearful their approach—so noiseless and direct."

It was a moment of great danger to the young man, and he well knew it. He was aware of the blind instinct of the dreadful animal, and that once put upon his scent, it never quits it. It follows it through every winding, and even intermingling with others. He saw that his own safety depended upon the leading scent they had been put upon. And remembering that both himself and Elliot had started from the door at the same moment, he had cause for uneasiness. But the cautious proceeding of the count, in starting the dogs from the interior of the prison, prevented any evil consequences such as for a moment he apprehended. The two dogs came on to his very feet with undiminished speed, their heads hanging low down to the earth, and apparently not seeing him. He stepped aside to avoid being run over by them, when they both stopped, and, greatly to his relief, wholly disregarding him though he was within four feet of them, they began to turn and double, and redouble, and snuff the ground, repeatedly crossing and recrossing the small space where he had had the struggle with the buccaneer, following their scent through all its devious threads until they disentangled it; and again

with a sharp whine they started off with their noses together in the direction taken by the fugitive.

They had hardly gone forward when the count, mounted on his hunter, and Paul, the negro keeper appeared in the road.

"Is that he, I see far down the levee?" asked the count as he came up.

"Yes—I had a struggle with him here, but he broke away and fled on seeing the dogs. You will not suffer them to tear him in pieces, I trust, count."

"He must take his fate," answered the count firmly. "He is too dangerous a man to let live. Will you be so kind as to return, and remain with the countess, who is alarmed, until I come back and give you a good account of the rascally picaroon."

With these words the count dashed forward, followed rapidly by the slave, Paul, on foot. Who can describe the agony of fear that took possession of the mind of Elliot on discovering the bloodhounds in pursuit. He knew well the nature of these animals: for he had often seen them used in Cuba for the pursuit of animals among the mountains of the island. He knew their unerring scent, their thirst for blood, and the fate of the victim that fell at length into their power. With all his energies he flew forward. By a turn in the river he caught sight of the brig-of-war drifting slowly down mid-stream a mile below.

"Oh, if I could only reach her," he groaned. "They are coming nearer," he cried, fearfully, glancing behind as he saw the black dogs sweeping round the point he had just doubled, their feet steadily upon his track. There is a mounted horseman too! It is the count, I am lost. The water. If I take to that the dogs will tear me to pieces in it. I think I could swim to the brig."

Before him was a huge water-oak, the branches of which hung far out over the water and at one extremity were within a foot of the surface. A thought of safety struck him! The hounds were each moment coming nigher and nigher. They were within a hundred yards of him when he saw the oak. He reached it and threw himself from the bank into the river. The next instant he rose above the surface and saw the hounds at a stand not two rods distant, at the spot he had sprung from. He succeeded in reaching the extremity of the branch and drawing himself with great efforts up into the limbs above his head. He saw the dogs were at a loss, and he now recollected that they paid no regard to sight, being wholly guided by the scent. He watched them with a feeling of security though he was in full sight and would easily have been discovered where he sat by a pointer dog. They ran round and round the spot, wholly at fault. The count now approached the tree and reined up. A moment after came the slave.

"They are at fault, Paul," he said quickly. "The fellow was here a few seconds since, for I saw him as I came round the bend of the road."

The negro came up and then surveyed the spot very carefully.

"He hab jump in de riber, massa. Dat place dar, whar Fang snuffin' so savage be whar he stood last."

The count galloped hastily down the shore and earnestly surveyed the surface of the river but discovered nothing.

"He must be drowned," he said. "If so, better still. So that he is out of the way of doing mischief, is all I want!"

Elliot, in the tree, ground his teeth with rage.

"I may yet escape to do you mischief, Sir Count," he muttered, within himself, his confidence returning in part, at the idea of security.

"He may be drown and may be no," answered Paul, stepping down close to the water and looking along it with his face laid down near its surface.

There was a slight motion in the reflected branches of the tree that bent over it, and raising himself he looked steadily into the tree, for he saw that one from the water could climb into it. He saw distinctly the figure of the buccaneer on the limb. At the discovery he gave a shout, at which the count, who was seated on his horse upon the bank, impatiently watching the actions of the hounds, leaped to the ground and

ran down the low embankment to the spot. On finding that he was discovered Elliot ran up the branch of the tree like a cat until he reached the trunk, which he was about to ascend to keep as far from the bloodhounds as he could when he saw standing beneath a limb that projected over the levee, the horse that the count had dismounted from. Danger is ever quick to avail itself of resources. In an instant he had traversed the limb and dropped himself into the saddle of the hunter. The next moment he was scouring along down the levee upon his back with the speed of the wind.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ESCAPE.

THE count had heard his horse start, and hastened up the low bank to arrest him, bidding the slave in the meanwhile to get into the limb to follow the buccaneer up the tree. On reaching the levee his astonishment and chagrin were unbounded on discovering the cause of his horse's departure from the spot. Elliot caught sight of him, and half-turning in the saddle he waved his hand and laughed mockingly.

"The infernal devil has escaped us! He dropped from the tree upon my horse!" cried he. "Put the dogs on the scent."

"They will only take that of the horse, massa."

"Let them take that, then," he answered, fiercely. "I am willing to sacrifice him to have this villain taken alive or dead."

The black brought the dogs to the scent, and with a low howl they bounded off in the track of the horse.

"Will they tear the horse and let him escape?" suddenly asked the count.

"Yes, I fear dey will, massa. Dey neber touches nothing but dey hab de scent ob."

"But they— You are right," he said, in a tone of angry disappointment. "It is too late to save the horse. They have gone off like a pair of tigers. Heaven grant they give him his due also. Pursue them, Paul, and if possible to secure him, do not let him escape, on your life!"

Elliot rode on with an expression of stern joy upon his face. He had defeated his pursuers—he had escaped with his life. He soon left them far out of sight, exulting, when he detected the hounds in full pursuit. He cursed his destiny, and was hesitating what course to pursue, when he saw ahead of him a *pirogue* drawn up to the bank just far enough in the water to admit of its being easily launched. He was now about a mile below the oak and nearly abreast of the brig which was half a mile distant in the middle of the river. His resolution was instantly taken. He suddenly stopped the horse, flung himself from him, and made for the boat, which he launched and threw himself in. He then, with a piece of board for a paddle, rapidly increased the distance between him and the bank of the river.

The horse, freed from his rider, stood a moment looking round, and then tossing his head, turned and went back along the levee the way he had come. He had gone but a few hundred yards when he encountered the advancing bloodhounds, which he bounded from the embankment into the road to avoid, being evidently afraid of them. But the dogs, true to their instinct; paid no attention, but followed their scent. But they had not gone far past him when all at once they stopped, hesitated, and turned back. They had come to where the scents met, and united, and instead of keeping on to where the horse had been left by Elliot they turned upon the fresher one and took back after the horse. They went scouring down the bank into the road and were on his track like the wind. Each moment they came nearer and nearer, and were within twenty yards of him before the poor animal knew that he was pursued. He now heard their feet behind him and a low growl which at intervals they emitted from their deep throats. Tossing his head and neighing with a note of terror, he increased his easy gallop into a flight. Fear gave him supernatural speed.

In a few moments afterward the negro Paul saw him go past him, the dogs close at his heels. The count, who was slowly walking toward home along the embankment, hearing the sound of footsteps in the road, turned and beheld his hunter coming up the

river-road, the bloodhounds at his haunches. The next moment they passed him, horse and hounds. The horse was stretching every sinew; his eyes were starting from their sockets. The dogs were making great leaps to fasten on his hams, the while uttering short, savage yells. In two minutes afterward horse and hounds were out of sight far up the road. The count listened. He thought he heard a fearful, unearthly outcry from a distance. It was repeated.

"They have brought down the noble creature. Maledictions upon this freebooter for this night's work. He has escaped and my horse perishes. Knowing the hounds would leave him to pursue the horse, he has thrown himself to the ground and has probably escaped."

With bitter and painful reflections the count hastened homeward. On reaching the gate of the villa a horrible sight presented itself to his eyes. His horse, dragged to the ground, was being torn to pieces by the two dogs, who were lapping the warm blood from his yet throbbing veins. He sickened at the sight. At this moment Theodore and the countess, whom the cries of the horse had brought out, appeared, whom he accompanied to the villa, relating to them what had transpired.

"Let him escape," said Theodore. "Before he can reach his companions we shall all be far beyond the reach of their vindictiveness."

"Has he succeeded in making his escape?" eagerly demanded the count of Paul, who now came up.

"I saw him in a pirogue, Massa Count, paddlin' out to de brig," answered the negro.

"Then he has indeed escaped the punishment I designed for him, and you have everything to fear from him and his companions, Theodore. The fellow has a life protected by some wicked spells. My poor Chasseur! I shall not forgive myself soon for thus sacrificing him. But I was anxious to secure this man at all hazards. If he had never returned to his comrades they would be as likely to suppose he had gone off with any money you might have given him, as that you had secured him. It would besides have given me a few weeks more security here as I cannot well leave without great sacrifices till Christmas, before which time his comrades would not think of coming to look after their companion, and call you to an account, Theodore. But now, if he joined the brig he will be in Havana in a week, and in three weeks from now we may hear from him. So next week we will leave here for the city."

"Do not delay," said the countess, earnestly. "He may betray Theodore this very night; and what protection have we if the brig should send armed boats up to take him?"

"Do not fear for me, dear countess," said Theodore, smiling.

"I will leave then to-morrow with you and Theodore, for the city," answered the count. "I can then return with my agent to arrange affairs finally."

"If I get you to town, dear Alphonse, I shall be careful that you don't leave me," said the countess, half playfully, half seriously. "Nor you either, Theodore."

"Yes, you are surrounded with too great dangers from these wretches, Theodore, remarked the count, earnestly, "to be suffered to leave either of us."

"Then, do you mean to keep me a prisoner at your house in town?" asked Theodore with a smile.

"Yes—if you won't give your parole not to leave the town, nor be abroad after twilight," replied the countess.

"That parole I cheerfully give, if you promise to go to Europe early in March, my dear countess."

"That is as Alphonse says," she replied, turning toward her husband.

"It is arranged. It shall be as you wish, Theodore. Confound that infernal buccaneer. I would not have lost my noble Chasseur for a score of the lives of fellows like him. There is a consolation in the hope that he will one day swing at a fore-yard-arm."

They had now reached the steps of the veranda which they ascended in silence and from which they soon after entered the house and retired for the night.

The gun-brig in the meanwhile had floated down mid-stream from her late anchorage, about a league, at the rate of three knots an hour. The top-gallantsails, jib, and trisails were set, though no air was stirring, and one of her boats remained alongside with the men in her, ready to pull her bows off-shore in case the current should take her toward the bank in any of the bends of the river. The regular watch was set and the men were forward in knots, conversing or leaning over the hammock-nettings gazing at the water or the shores. The moon shone with cloudless luster, delineating every shadow of the rigging upon the deck, silvering the sails aloft, and giving to the broad river the appearance of a polished mirror. On the quarter-deck walked arm-in-arm General McDonald and his daughter, enjoying the beauty of the night, and occasionally pausing to admire the picturesque appearance by moonlight of some villa they were gliding past, half buried in gardens of strange trees. On the other side of the deck, near the waist walked Captain Lennox, alone, while the lieutenant of the watch was leaning over the gangway smoking a cigar. Captain Stewart was below. All on board was quiet and in perfect keeping with the beauty and repose of the hour. Captain Lennox suddenly stopped in his walk, and addressed his lieutenant.

"Masterton, did you notice that young count? I'll be hanged if I can get his face out of my head. I have seen him somewhere, and not in the best company either. I would give a month's pay to tell where I had met him."

"I noticed him to be a very handsome, distinguished-looking young man," answered Lieutenant Masterton; an old seaman of five and forty, waiting promotion; "but I was so busy getting the anchor up that I didn't pay particular attention to him."

"Well, it is my impression we have met and not very pleasantly either. What is Carson doing there in the first cutter—and at the bow oar?" he demanded, glancing down into the boat.

"I suspect he must have left the man that pulled that oar ashore. He was not to be found when the boat's crew were piped, and he is either ashore or overboard."

"He has more likely run away. What was his name?"

"Elliot, sir," answered the coxswain, who was addressed.

"I remember him. A fellow with a hang-devil look. I could never catch his eye. We shipped him in the Havana, I think, Masterton."

"Yes, sir."

"He is well away."

"There is a boat pulling after us, sir," called a man from the maintop.

"Whereaway?"

"In-shore, a point off the larboard quarter, sir."

"Ah, I see it," answered Captain Lennox. "My glass here." The steward placed it in his hands, and he leveled it at the object.

After a moment he said to General McDonald, who had approached him:

"It is a skiff containing one man, who is pulling for his life, one would think. He has neither hat nor jacket. He will be aboard of us shortly at the way he is coming."

All eyes were now turned toward the approaching pirogue, and numerous were the conjectures as to the motive which led to this pursuit of the brig. Aided by the current, and a piece of board, the boat came on, though slowly, and at length, Captain Lennox was able to detect the features of the person it contained.

"It is the bow-oarsman, Elliot," he said. "The fellow got asleep or drunk, and finding the brig off has stolen a shore-boat and put after us."

In a few minutes more the pirogue was close under the stern, when the lieutenant of the watch hailed:

"What boat is that?"

"The Sleuth Hound," answered a voice from the pirogue.

Captain Lennox laughed at the reply, and ordered him to come alongside. The next moment Elliot stood in the waist.

"Well, sir," said Captain Lennox, sternly.

"I have no excuse to give, sir," answered

Elliot, whose appearance yet bore all the signs of the terrible scenes of danger and fear he had passed through; "but if you and Captain Stewart will grant me a few minutes' private interview, I have something to communicate to you of the greatest importance." The buccaneer's voice was agitated and earnest, while his face wore an expression of concentrated malice.

Captain Lennox surveyed him a moment in suspense, and then said:

"Very well—you shall have it. But if this is gammon to claw off from punishment for being ashore without leave, you'll get double."

"It's no claw off, I'll take my oath, sir," answered Elliot, with great earnestness.

"Your appearance and the manner you have come on board, leads me to the belief that you have some intelligence of importance. Follow me to the cabin. But first get a jacket and put on."

The state-room of Miss McDonald, as well as that of her father, and that of Captain Stewart communicated with the central or main cabin by means of doors, the upper part of which was composed of Venetian blinds. Miss McDonald had retired to her state-room a moment or two before Elliot came on board. She had closed her door but a few seconds when she heard Captain Lennox enter the cabin and call up Captain Stewart.

"What is it?" demanded the latter.

"A man by the name of Elliot," said the former, speaking in a low tone, "that was shipped in Havana, and who left the brig at the count's, has just come on board in a shore-boat, and he says he has some news of importance for you and I to hear. I have thought it best to let him overhaul his news and ordered him down here."

Captain Stewart got up and entered the cabin. Elliot came down at the same moment with a look but half-assured, yet impelled onward to his purpose, by his thirst for vengeance, at the remembrance of what he had gone through. General McDonald appeared, being sent for to the deck by Captain Lennox.

"Well, Sir Runaway," said Captain Lennox, as Elliot stood before them with an air half-timid, half-audacious, "we are now prepared to hear what you have to say. Out with it."

The pirate hesitated; stole a doubtful glance at each of the faces bent sternly and inquiringly upon him and for a moment his heart failed him.

"We wait, man," said Captain Stewart, impatiently.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, in a husky tone, "what I've got to say is a matter of life and death. It's a yard-arm affair," he added, trying to impress them with the importance of what he had to say.

"That I'll be sworn, if you had anything to do with it," answered Captain Lennox, laughing.

This remark was by no means encouraging to Elliot considering the circumstances; and he colored between fear and rage. He saw, however, that the other two gentlemen seemed to be more interested by what he had said, and to them he looked as he continued:

"It's a hangin' matter, and as I am in some sort implicated, before I confess anything, I must have your promise not to harm me for what comes of my own confession."

"You are bold, sir," said General McDonald.

"I cannot risk my life for nothing," he said, with some impatience. "I possess, gentlemen, information which you will be glad to know. But as I can give it only by implicating myself, I must be silent unless you are willing to give me your word that I shall not suffer."

The three officers interchanged looks; a word or two passed between them in low tones, and then nodding to each other affirmatively, Captain Stewart said:

"It seems that you possess the knowledge of some crime important for us to know; and that you have obtained this knowledge by being an accomplice. What this crime is we are of course ignorant. But we give you this promise that if your information is really of importance to the Government you shall be unmolested."

Elliot reflected a moment.

"This promise seems to me too uncertain. My life is at stake, and I do not come to give it away."

"Then you have done murder," said General McDonald, severely. "We cannot shield a criminal."

"I would advise that the rascal be at once put into irons and made to confess his crime to a proper tribunal," said Captain Lennox.

"He deserves hanging by his own confession," said Captain Stewart. "Can we compound with the villain, gentlemen?"

Elliot turned as white as a sheet, during these free-spoken remarks. He had the fear of death in a remarkable degree, for a man of his daring life.

"Gentlemen, if you act upon what I have said, you will take undue advantage of a poor devil," he said, with a sort of hysterical laugh.

"Silence, sir!" said Captain Stewart. "What shall be done with him?"

"If you arrest me, gentlemen, you will lose what I know, and which you will be glad to know, Captain Lennox. It is about one of Lafitte's lieutenants."

"Do you know where any of these desperadoes are concealed?" demanded Captain Lennox, eagerly. "I would give my commission to get a pair of bracelets upon one of them chaps. I owe them all a grudge for beating off the Sleuth Hound."

"It is of one of his officers I was to give you information," answered Elliot, feeling himself now quite secure.

"Give me such information as will enable me to capture him, and you have my word that we will make no inquiries into your own private affairs."

"And will the other gentlemen give me their word?"

"Yes," answered Captain Stewart and General McDonald, after exchanging glances.

"Even if I had been one of Lafitte's men myself?" asked Elliot, still doubtful.

"By the sword of Lucifer!" exclaimed Captain Lennox, warmly, "the rogue is then one of that pirate's fellows! I would have sworn it from his countenance! Gentlemen, ought we not to arrest him?"

"You have given me your word," said Elliot, trembling, yet speaking with a bold tone.

"We cannot in honor avail ourselves of his intimation," said General McDonald. "The man is, without doubt, one of the pirate's former crew; but as our information comes from his own voluntary confession, we cannot harm him."

"Not unless he gives us better game," answered Captain Lennox, looking as if he was ready to fasten his grasp. "See that you do it, or I will make an ear-ring of you to the larboard foreyard-arm, for shipping on board his majesty's gun-brig."

"It is true, gentlemen, I served with Lafitte, and after he was pardoned by the United States Government I quit him, as he was going to turn his arm against England, which, as I am an Englishman—"

"That pardon is not recognized by the British Government," said General McDonald, sternly.

"And so being an Englishman," said Captain Lennox, sarcastically, "you would not join the Americans. Tell that to the marines, Elliot! You know you have helped massacre more than one English crew. By Heaven! I don't know what prevents me from swinging you at the yard-arm at once. Go on!"

"I left him, as I said, and shipped in the Mexican service. I have been roving about from one place to another since, till I shipped in this brig in Havana. You wouldn't harm a poor devil for wishing to be honest, and serving under his own flag?" he said, artfully.

"Well, what have you to say more? Why do we find you coming aboard the brig in a shore-boat? Why were you missing?" demanded Captain Lennox.

"Well, gentlemen, this is what I was coming to. When I was with Captain Lafitte, it was in the Gertrude, and—"

"The very vessel I fought, gentlemen," said Captain Lennox, in an excited manner. "So, villain, you were on board of her, and doubtless in the very action!"

"Yes, sir."

"You remember the Sleuth Hound, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"And how dare you ship on board of her? This is impudence enough to hang you!" said Captain Lennox, angrily. "Pardon me general, and Captain Stewart, but the fellow's audacity warms me. I have said if I could catch one who was in that action, I would be willing to turn priest ever afterward, and now the villain is here, I am forbid to lay hands on him!"

"You shall have one of far more importance, sir," said Elliot, with sparkling eyes. "Does your honor remember seeing in the action, a young officer very busy in giving orders?"

"Yes—a youth in a blue jacket?"

"He was Lafitte's lieutenant. He raised him in his cabin, and set everything by him; and he was as brave as a lion."

"I remember him perfectly."

"Well, he has now got to be a young man of one-and-twenty, and is organizing a band out of the old fellows of Lafitte; and he is bold, skillful in piracy (from being so well trained), and having money at command, he finds it easy to raise a crew, especially as, to Lafitte's people, to be under him is almost like old times come back again."

"The very youth I was speaking about to-night, gentlemen," said Captain Lennox. They nodded in reply.

"This is news," said Captain Stewart. "Do you say he is organizing a crew?"

"Yes, sir, and is now in treaty for a vessel."

"And where is his rendezvous? How know you this?" demanded Captain Lennox, rising from his seat.

"That is what I was about to communicate. I have your promise, gentlemen, to be unmolested?" he asked, hesitatingly.

"Yes—most assuredly, if you give such information as will place this young buccaneer in our hands," answered Captain Stewart.

"Then I will hold nothing back, gentlemen," said Elliot with great appearance of candor. "This is the whole story: In Havana is another lieutenant of Lafitte's, by name Ricardo, a skillful seaman, but not a man of education like the other. Between the two a secret correspondence had been kept up for some time in relation to getting once more on the ocean with a good deck beneath their feet. Ricardo was to collect a crew in Havana, and the other was to furnish money to purchase a vessel. Well, three weeks ago Ricardo had got his crew all told, and then sent to the other to tell him that a Baltimore clipper was there for sale in port, and that if he would come with the money he could purchase her low. He was to have the command, and Ricardo to be first lieutenant. I was to be second."

"You!" exclaimed all three gentlemen.

"I promised to tell the whole truth, gentlemen."

"Out with it then, in Heaven's name, and ease thy conscience," said Captain Lennox.

"The messenger sent by Ricardo was myself. Hearing that the Sleuth Hound was bound for New Orleans, I shipped in her."

"A pretty shipment I made of you. But where is this young pirate chief's retreat—New Orleans?"

"You shall hear, sir. I shipped and came up the river, having a chart of the land in my eye, and found when we anchored that I was not far off from my man. We pulled up to the villa, and while I was in the boat he came to me, expecting me; but, as the coxswain was in the stern, he did not speak, but passed on. At the grave we met again, and there I—"

"Avast, there!" cried Captain Lennox, who had been pacing the cabin with a very excited step, now turning full upon the sailor, "was not your pirate the young man—the young count?"

"Yes, sir!"

"I have it! The puzzle is solved! That's where I saw him! It was in the action with the Gertrude! It is the same."

All this was spoken with rapidity, and in the most extraordinary tone of energetic excitement.

"What means it?" exclaimed General McDonald.

"How, Lennox! You don't say that—"

"I do say, though, that the young man on

board here to-night, was the very youth I saw on the quarter-deck of Lafitte's schooner. I knew we had met before. I wish I had known this sooner. Elliot, you have told the truth!"

"But it cannot be possible!" exclaimed General McDonald, with emotion.

"It is incredible," responded Captain Stewart.

"Yet my own testimony will corroborate Elliot's words," answered Captain Lennox, positively.

"And this you swear to? that this young man was Lafitte's lieutenant?" demanded General McDonald, addressing the pirate.

"Yes, sir; I'll take my oath of it."

"And that he is now planning a piratical expedition?" asked Captain Stewart.

"Yes."

"Go on! Let us hear the remainder!" said Captain Lennox.

"At the grave, after you passed with the body, he detained me."

"I remember that he did not come with us," said Captain Lennox, who now, like the others, was deeply interested in Elliot's account.

"I told him there what had been done in Havana, and what was now wanted. He promised to get the money—"

"What amount?" asked General McDonald.

"Twenty thousand dollars. He promised to bring it with him next week, taking the first vessel that passes, after he should go up to New Orleans to get it."

"And was he so rich?"

"It was the Count DeOyley's."

"Then he is not the count's son?"

"No—the count after capturing Lafitte and killing him, adopted him, as he was young."

"And now he repays his benefactor by robbing him," responded Captain Stewart, indignantly. "I am surprised he should have taken a youth so nurtured!"

"Well—and how happens it you came on board, sir, in the condition you did? Why did you desert your young chief?"

"After it was settled that he was to come with money I proposed to return to the brig to report to Ricardo. But he refused to let me come on board lest I might betray him, for he had made me vexed by telling me he should not let me act as second lieutenant in the schooner. So, finding I was resolved to go on board, he took advantage of me at a moment I didn't suspect—disarmed me and made me go before him to the villa, and in a lock-up where they keep their refractory slaves, he bolted me in, as he said, till the brig should sail."

"But this was hardly offense enough for you to betray him, seeing he did it in self-preservation."

"I might have overlooked it, Captain Stewart, but that wasn't all. After the brig got under way he came to speak to me, partly opening the door, when some high words passed and I broke past him and swore I would not be caged for any man. Well, the first thing I knew as I was making for the shore to hail the brig was that he had set a brace of bloodhounds after me." Elliot's face here turned pale and his voice trembled. "After a terrible flight I was so fortunate as to find a skiff, which I threw myself into, leaving the bloody hounds on the bank. I then made the best of my way to the brig, resolved I'd inform against him if I had to swing for it."

Elliot pronounced the last words with a sort of impudent defiance. The three gentlemen looked at one another in silence. The recital of the buccaneer had produced upon them all a deep impression. Their first feelings were of disgust and resentment against Elliot for introducing himself into a vessel-of-war, and also vexation at being unable to punish him for his confessed participation in piracy, then turned toward Theodore, the victim of the malice and falsehood of the revengeful pirate.

"Elliot, you must content yourself to remain awhile in irons," said Captain Stewart. "You will be wanted as a witness and possibly may not be found when needed."

"Gentlemen, you promised not to harm me!" he added with mingled fear and defiance.

"Nor do we intend to! We detain you only as a witness, and for safer security iron you!" answered Captain Lennox, coolly.

"Well, I am willing, if it must be so. But you are aware there is a reward of a hundred pounds for any one of Lafitte's men, gentlemen. I think I ought to have it."

"You shall have it, if we succeed in taking the person you have informed against," said Captain Lennox, dryly.

Elliot was then led, muttering and not perfectly satisfied with his own safety, into the gun-room, and there had irons put on him and a sentinel placed over him. His only consolation was that Theodore probably would soon be his companion.

The three officers, left alone in the cabin, now earnestly conversed together upon the information that had been obtained.

"What is your opinion, General McDonald?"

"That the young man ought to be arrested. I never have been so shocked at anything as at this. So noble, frank, ingenuous and withal modest in his bearing. It will be an outrage upon Count D'Oyley's feelings to arrest a youth under his charge, but we have evidence of his intention to rob him—therefore it is due the count for his own security, from the ingratitude of his *protege*."

"The only drawback is Count D'Oyley's feelings. But as you say, he must be protected. Do you know how to account for this youth's sudden indisposition?"

"Yes," answered Captain Lennox. "I recollect it, when you were speaking of Lafitte and the Government reward."

"Could this be fear?" asked General McDonald.

"No; perhaps surprise and sudden emotion. How near he came betraying himself. It seems the count and countess knew the cause of his illness," returned Captain Stewart.

"They could not otherwise," observed the general. "They, however, can have no suspicion that he is so corrupt as to go back to the vicious course from which they have redeemed him."

"Well, Lennox, what is to be done? This nest of pirates must be broken up ere they hatch out."

"My plan is to bring the brig to anchor, and take the gig and first cutter, and pull back and arrest him. We will take men enough to overawe the slaves, in case they attempt to defend him. Then, making this Elliot show us the rendezvous of Ricardo and his crew at the Havana, give them over to the Spanish authorities, letting him then go free, as we are bound to do. Their young leader had better be sent to England, for trial, in the Minerva. Taking Elliot's testimony under oath, in Havana, we sha'n't want him more."

"That is a good plan, Lennox. Let us proceed to act upon it. I will go in the gig with you, and General McDonald, also, if he will honor us with his company. By sunrise, we should be back to the brig again."

This proposed arrangement was carried out. The brig was brought to her anchor, and the boats started off on a pull of over six miles to the villa. Every word of the foregoing conversation had been overheard by Miss McDonald in her state-room, and explained to her the mystery about the handsome young stranger—but alas! at what an expense of weeping—at what trial of the heart! After they had left the brig, she knelt—she wept—she prayed! she wrung her hands! She believed—she disbelieved! She honored—she feared! In a word her bosom was in a chaos of the wildest and most painful agitation. The only one she had ever loved, was perhaps to prove utterly unworthy.

"No—no! He cannot be guilty! He is too noble, generous! Crime never stained that brow! He having been a *protege* of the terrible Lafitte, if he had been depraved, would the captor of Lafitte have adopted him into his family? This pirate—with his evil gleaming eye and hard deep voice. He has spoken falsely? His words sound untruthful! He has, perhaps, made the young man a proposition from pirates! He may have been sent to offer him a command! This may have been done. But because the noble youth refused that, this man has betrayed him. Falsehood can never so perfectly hide itself that the heart will not detect the imposture. I know he hath not spoken truth! And they have gone for him! He will be

taken and brought on board a prisoner! He will be taken to England in chains. Who will stand up for him? who will plead for him? He will perish! No, I will assert his innocence. This Elliot shall be made to confess that he has borne him false witness! I will interest my father in him! I will save him—for I know that he is innocent!"

Such is the power of true love, when once awakened in the heart of a generous and noble woman.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ATTEMPTED ESCAPE.

UNABLE to repose after the events of the night, Theodore, instead of remaining in his room, threw up the Venetian window and walked out on the veranda. Here he walked for nearly two hours, and planning in his thoughts a bright career for the future. Hearing him up the count at length came out to persuade him to retire, as the hour was advancing toward morning.

"I cannot sleep. My thoughts are too lively and restless, my dear count. Besides I have made up my mind no longer to be dependent on you. To-morrow, I leave you and mean to enter the British service as a common seaman, if need be! I shall make my way up!" he added proudly. "Listen! Is not that the fall of oars!"

Both listened a moment and were satisfied that a boat was pulling up along the shore. The next moment an opening in the trees gave them a view of a barge full of men which the same instant pulled in to the land. "This is singular," said the count.

"By no means," said Theodore, turning very pale, but speaking with calmness.

"What is it? who are they?" demanded the count with surprise.

"The pirate Elliot escaped to the gun-brig!" answered Theodore significantly.

"And he has betrayed you! Fly!" cried the count, the whole truth flashing upon him.

"No! I will meet them like a man! I am not guilty, wherefore then should I fly?" he said in a tone of calm despair.

"Yet you must not be taken. To the stable; accompany me. Mount the first horse and you are safe. See, they are already approaching the house. Lose not a moment. They will make no distinction between you and the vilest criminal."

"Theodore! Oh, Theodore! If you regard me—if you would not render miserable the life you once saved, fly," cried the countess, who had overheard enough to learn his danger. The men also were in sight, preceded by Captain Lennox and the other two gentlemen. "You will be safe in town."

"For your sake, countess," he answered.

The count took him and hurried with him through the hall. They had already been seen on the veranda by the approaching party.

"He is escaping," said General McDonald. "I will take a detachment and cross the lawn to the river-road, if he should fly that way. Captain Stewart, you will pass round the house, while Captain Lennox enters it in the front."

This disposition of their force was instantly effected. The countess met Captain Lennox in the veranda. With assumed calmness she asked his purpose.

"To arrest a young man, madam, that I saw on this gallery a moment since," he answered bluntly.

"For what crime?"

"Piracy! He is the head of a gang of buccaneers."

"It is false! He is innocent."

"That remains to be proved! Pardon me! But I must enter!"

"Poor Theodore! He is the victim of that pirate's vengeance!"

The search of Captain Lennox was unsuccessful. Captain Stewart saw at a distance, a man mount a horse in the stable-yard, and spur like the wind. He gave the alarm. A gate was at the end of the stable lane, which Theodore's horse cleared at a flying leap. He had not recovered his seat in the saddle, when General McDonald seized the horse by the head with a strong grasp.

"You are my prisoner!"

Theodore raised his arm, in which he held a cutlass the count had thrust into his hand, to cut him down, when seeing that it was

the father of Emma McDonald, his weapon dropped harmlessly to his side.

"I surrender myself," he said in a tone that expressed in one feeling the intensest anguish he might at such a moment of dishonor he supposed to feel. He was conducted round in front of the villa a prisoner. In vain the count and countess pleaded for his innocence, when they learned the charge brought against him.

"My noble sir," said General McDonald, "your generosity blinds you to the facts apparent to others. There can be no doubt of the guilt of the young man. Why then his attempt to escape before he knew our intention! Before we reached the house?"

"It was at my earnest request. He refused to escape at first. He suspected your purpose because Elliot swore to betray him."

"I can do nothing, monsieur," said General McDonald. "I feel deeply for you and your lady."

"Will you permit us to go to England with him?" suddenly and earnestly demanded the countess.

"With pleasure, madame," answered Captain Stewart. "You shall be accommodated with a state-room on board the Minerva."

The countess thanked him with gratitude. The preparations for departure were immediately commenced, and the count having written and sent some letters to New Orleans about his affairs, at sunrise the whole party left in the boats. In one of these was Captain Stewart and Lennox, and Theodore in chains; in the other General McDonald, the count and countess. It was a far more melancholy arrival to some of the party than the funeral procession of the evening before. The sun was an hour high when they reached the brig, which soon got under way and the wind rising with the sun, she went rapidly down the river. At the close of the day she reached the Balize and an hour afterward Theodore was transferred to the Minerva, followed by the count and countess. General McDonald and his daughter also came on board, accompanied by the coffin of Lord Clarence. Captain Stewart brought Elliot along with himself in the boat heavily manacled.

During the passage down the river, Theodore had been silent and depressed. Out of deference to the countess, he was confined in one of the state-rooms. His spirit was consoled with the assurance that she and the count believed him innocent, and a calm serenity filled his soul at the knowledge from her own lips, that Miss McDonald also thought him so. From her, the count and countess being present, he heard the whole narrative of Elliot, and he was not surprised at the steps that had been taken. The count did not believe Elliot, though the general spoke of the twenty thousand dollars of which he was to be dispossessed. To this he replied, to his surprise, that he knew of Elliot's proposition, for Theodore had told him of it; and that Elliot's vindictiveness arose wholly from Theodore's refusal. This information, and the deep interest taken in Theodore by his two friends, led General McDonald to think that the young man might be innocent, and the victim of Elliot's vindictiveness. The count then related to him and Captain Stewart the whole history of the matter, and of the chase by the bloodhounds. Captain Stewart was not easy to move, having once made up his mind against a man. But General McDonald was now fully convinced of his innocence; and when he said so, his daughter, forgetful of the presence of others, cast herself into his arms, and wept with grateful joy. This natural burst of feeling betrayed to all the state of her heart. General McDonald frowned and looked displeased, and ordering her to her state-room, left the cabin. It was a few moments after this scene, that the order was given to leave the brig for the Minerva frigate. They had been on board but a few minutes, when both vessels filled away and stood for Havana.

The situation of Theodore on board the frigate was less pleasant than in the brig. He was confined in the ward-room, and the presence of a sentry and the constant appearance of officers annoyed him. All, however, regarded him with interest; for, in his captivity, conscious of those he loved he lost none of his dignity and manly self-pos-

session. After the first few hours he was calm, and even cheerful.

It was the first evening on board the Minerva frigate. In the cabin was the Count D'Oyley and General McDonald and Captain Stewart, the latter having just entered. The count was passing to and fro with a restless step. The countess and Miss McDonald were in their state-room, lamenting the fate of poor Theodore, for whom the latter no longer concealed her passion.

"Captain," said the count impressively, "will you be so kind as to order Elliot to be brought into the cabin? I think I have a way by which I can bring the truth out of him. And I feel confident you will have nothing against my young friend for the misfortunes which placed him in his youth with Lafitte."

"Nothing. If this Elliot can be proved to be a liar, your friend shall go free. Perhaps Lennox, in my place, might still have an old account to settle; but of this feeling I have nothing. I have to go in the ward-room to see a sick officer and will have him sent in."

"Will you be present, also?" asked the count.

"With pleasure. I hope you may succeed. I feel great interest in this young man." The captain went out as he spoke.

"And so do I," said General McDonald, impressively. "There is a striking resemblance to some one I know in his features and very voice, which singularly endears him to me. Yet I cannot tell. You say he is no relation of yours?"

"No, general. His story is this: When he was about seven or eight years of age, Lafitte found him floating on what appeared to be the wreck of a British vessel-of-war. He took him off, and from that time the boy knew no other parent. He was with Lafitte when he fell, who warmly recommended him to my care."

"What name had he?" asked General McDonald.

"Only Theodore."

"Here comes the prisoner, gentlemen," said Captain Stewart entering, followed by Elliot in the custody of a marine. On seeing the count the pirate turned pale and his knees trembled. The count fixed his eyes on him with great steadiness a few moments till he had the man completely under the influence of his eye. He then said in a stern, deep voice: "Do you recognize me?"

"Yes," answered the man without raising his eyes to encounter the keen glance of those he felt were reading his soul.

CHAPTER XVII.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

"I HAVE heard your story on coming on board. It has succeeded thus far admirably. Your victim is a captive, and you are to have your liberty on reaching Havana. This is so, is it not?" sternly demanded the count.

"Yes, if these gentlemen keep their word," answered Elliot, stealing a glance round.

"That they will do. Otherwise I cannot have you in my power."

"You!" repeated the pirate, starting till his chains clanked and shook. "I am not in your power again!" he exclaimed in a tone of mingled alarm and horror.

"After you reach Havana and betray Ricardo and his gang, who, remember! are to be examined separately from you in reference to your testimony against Theodore (I see that you shudder, knowing that they will, not knowing of your arrest, prove you false in every point). After you have done this service Captain Stewart will discharge you. You will then be free. Answer me?"

"Yes."

"I say no! From the possession of Captain Stewart you pass into my power! I have given no pledge to let you go free. I have dwelt in Havana. I know the present Governor-General. I shall seize you as a pirate and at once deliver you up to justice. You know how summary that will be in Cuba. In three days after you leave the frigate your head will be stuck over the gate of the Alameda."

The count, haven spoken, turned away while the two gentlemen looked at each other with surprise. The criminal followed the count's steps with his eye. His look was fearful and expressive of cowardly anguish. Death to him was terrible. The count was

still silent. He saw that the effect he desired to produce was working. He lingered a moment and then slowly approached the man. Elliot instantly dropped on his knees.

"Mercy, count, mercy!"

"Wretch, dare you ask it of me?"

"Mercy! Spare my life, and I will confess all."

"First confess."

Briefly and agitated the villain then gave a true statement of the facts as they were. The general and Captain Stewart listened with astonishment. When he had ended, General McDonald and Captain Stewart rose at the same moment with the same impulse of feeling and advanced into the ward-room. In a few moments after Theodore was freed from his chains and conducted in by them. The count embraced him, and the countess threw herself into his arms and wept for joy.

"Emma, you shall have a kiss, too, girl," said General McDonald, leading his daughter up to Theodore, who took her hand and pressed it with emotion to his lips. He was soon told to what he owed his liberation. Elliot was removed back to his prison, and as he went his eyes glared furiously upon Theodore, but instantly sunk as they met the gaze of Count D'Oyley.

It was a happy party.

"We are all now well persuaded of your innocence, young gentleman," said General McDonald, with feeling and courtesy; "and we beg that you will not let the fact of your having been at one time thrown under the protection of Lafitte cast a cloud over your spirit. We are confident it was your misfortune, and much praise is due to you, that amid so much evil, you have preserved yourself from contamination. We would like to hear your account of your early life."

This, Theodore began to relate to them as he had already done to the count. When he said that the only recollection he had was of a mother and sister, he was asked, by Miss McDonald her name.

"Grace," he replied.

"My cousin!" she repeated with surprise.

"Hold—one word if you please!" cried General McDonald, with an eagerness and agitation that surprised all; "when—what year was this you were found by Lafitte?"

"In the Spring of 1808."

"And where?"

"Near the African coast."

"Your age then?"

"Eight."

"Have you nothing with you you had then?"

"Nothing but this brooch?" he answered showing a small gold pin in his bosom.

"Has it no work of any kind?"

"A deer's antlers engraved upon it," he said, taking it out and handing it to him.

"Now—is there a Providence above!" cried General McDonald with extraordinary emotion.

"In the Spring of 1808 my deceased brother, Lord Clarence, was returning from India in the Scapis frigate with his lady, son and daughter, when she was wrecked at night, on a rock far out from the coast of Africa, and broke into many pieces. My brother was saved and his lady and child, but their son was lost. His name was Theodore. His sister's name was Grace. This youth when he was found was of the same age and name, and now wears a pin with the crest of the family, which was then in his possession! And more, I behold in him, what has been perplexing me, the image of my deceased brother Edward!"

The evidence was conclusive. There was a general exclamation of surprise and joy. Theodore was clasped to General McDonald's heart, and seemingly in a dream, he clasped his cousin to his own.

On reaching England he was acknowledged as Lord Clarence. He found his sister, and at once deeply loved her; but with different love he regarded his cousin. In a few months afterward they were married, and Lord and Lady Clarence were pronounced the handsomest and noblest couple that had been presented at court for many years.

The fate of Elliot, known for his deeds of cruelty by the *schizoid* of RED KNIFE, appeared to be decided upon. Nothing remained but for him to betray Ricardo and his crew, and accept his freedom. On arriving at Havana, in the brig, Elliot was ac-

accompanied by a proper guard to the rendezvous of Ricardo and his men. They were found in an old ruin without the walls of the city, and immediately surrounded and made prisoners. The rage of Ricardo, on discovering the treachery of Red Knife, knew no bounds. With one spring, he fastened himself on Elliot, and would have torn him to pieces, had not the officers plucked them asunder. The scuffle was short however, for overpowered by numbers, Ricardo and his crew were quickly handcuffed and taken to prison. They died with great resolution, refusing all ghostly advice to the last, while Elliot went forth a wanderer upon the earth, despised even by those who had availed themselves of his services in bringing to justice his late companions.

But what should Elliot do now that he had caused the death of his companions? He was unfit to pursue any honorable employment, and indeed, he did not even dream of doing so. The eyes of the authorities were on him! He was watched at every step, and he soon found that Havana was no place for him.

It was then that, sauntering one day near the wharves, Elliot heard himself called by the old title of "Red Knife." He started as if one of his late companions had risen from the dead. Looking in every direction, he could not discover the person who had spoken. He turned, and was about pursuing his way again when he heard the same words. There was no person in sight from whom the old familiar sounds could have proceeded, unless, indeed, it was a young Spanish girl, who, at the moment, was looking from a high window that overlooked the shipping. He regarded her attentively, and though she seemed not to be noticing him, yet he imagined that he detected a smile on her lips. Could it be that his name was known to this girl? He gazed attentively at her features, and at length recognized in them a young female who had formerly been an attendant in a famous drinking-house to which he had often resorted with Ricardo in other days.

Perceiving herself known, the young girl beckoned Elliot to enter the house below. At first he hesitated, lest it should be a trap set for him by some of the friends of Ricardo, to lure him into the house and revenge the death of his old accomplices. But being rendered desperate by his forlorn and penniless condition, he at length entered the building, and ascended to the apartment in which he had seen the girl. There he found an American—a tall Indian by the name of Richards, whom he had frequently met in the streets of Havana, and whom he had caroused with in the days of his prosperity. The Indian shook his hand cordially, and entered into conversation with him. It was not long before he made known to Elliot his object in thus renewing their old acquaintance.

He inquired into the condition of Elliot, and finding that he was destitute of money, and had no means of procuring any, without stooping to manual labor, he made a sign to the girl, who withdrew a moment, and soon after appeared with wine and some choice eatables. Elliot, having done justice to these with his friend, felt in better spirits, and listened with interest to the developments now made to him by Richards. He stated that a small schooner was at that moment lying in an inlet near the mouth of a gulf, commanded by one Diego—an old Spaniard—who was anxious to procure a man for lieutenant who had been in the business before, and who had seen active service. Richards did not, or affected not to know the part which Elliot had acted toward his late companions, and though the latter watched him closely while speaking, he could not discover anything in his looks or manner that denoted a distrust of Elliot's good faith.

Red Knife, therefore, could see no reasonable objection to closing with the offer so opportunely made to him, and he at once acceded to it. On that very night, he put off with Richards in a small boat and sought the place of rendezvous. The schooner was evidently a fast sailer and admirably adapted to the purpose for which she was designed. On going on board of her Elliot learned that her present crew had come into possession of her by putting off from the

shore in two boats, boarding her, and putting to death her officers and crew. That argued well for their enterprise and good faith in the opinion of Red Knife, and, indeed, a more desperate-looking set of villains, he had never set his eyes upon.

However fierce and unprincipled the crew of the schooner were, they had their match in Red Knife, who was not a whit inferior to any of them in those attainments which are so necessary to the piratical profession. He now found himself lieutenant of a schooner, and once more trod the deck with the comfortable feelings of a man of respectability. Some little difficulty occasionally occurred between him and the men under his command, but he had only to flourish his long knife over their heads to persuade them that subordination was a virtue which even freebooters could not do without.

In less than a week after Red Knife joined the schooner, they heard of a merchant ship with a rich cargo on her way from New Orleans. Vigorous preparations were made to overhaul her as soon as she had cleared the Gulf. The ballast was shifted to bring the schooner more by the stern, the sails were put in order, and every rag that could be brought to bear was made ready for setting. The men were well armed with pistols, knives, and daggers, and to these Diego trusted more than to the long gun amidships.

It was not long before a man stationed on the bluff came running down to the schooner, with the tidings that a sail was in sight. Diego took the spy-glass and went up to the lookout. He came back and announced to his expectant crew, that there was a show of canvas above the horizon, though he thought it could not be the vessel for which they waited, as the size of the sail was too small. After taking a look at the object, Elliot differed from the captain. He thought the vessel must be the one they were desirous of boarding, and advised that immediate preparations should be made for the attack. Diego, who placed great dependence in his lieutenant, gave the necessary orders, and the schooner was turned down to the mouth of the inlet where she rode by one anchor just dropped under the forefoot. But the breeze was light, and much time elapsed before the pirates could decide upon the character of the stranger. Toward noon, however, no doubt remained upon their minds that the vessel was the *Huron*, a large ship, belonging to New York. Several of the pirates had seen the same ship and remembered her peculiar rig, the rake of her masts, and the varnished waist which was now distinctly visible by the aid of the glass.

The schooner lay still till about two o'clock in the afternoon, by which time the ship had come up nearly abreast the inlet, with a fair wind and studding-sails set on both sides, though the breeze was not more than four knots. Diego now gave orders to lift the anchor. Sails were set, and the schooner shot out into the Gulf, three or four points from the wind, so as to intercept the *Huron*. It was evident that this movement was immediately discovered by the ship, and that suspicions were awakened; for the latter came up as close to the wind as she could without shaking her studding-sails, heading off-shore. Two men were also seen going aloft to look out for sails. The schooner kept up the chase in the wake of the *Huron*, and was soon able to bring her long gun to bear. Preparations were made to give the ship a shot through the cabin windows, when the latter yawed and presented her broadside to the pirate. It was evident that every motion of the schooner was closely watched from the ship. Orders were given by Diego to fire, however. The shot took effect just forward of the foremast, and splinters were seen flying from the bulwark of the ship. There was also a commotion on board as if some of the crew had been wounded. The ship then discharged a couple of guns, but the shots fell short, which caused a fierce shout of laughter among the pirate crew.

"Load! and give it to her again!" cried Diego; but just then a sail was discovered approaching the mouth of the Gulf. Diego went aloft with the spy-glass, but he could not make out the character of the stranger. All this time the schooner was slowly draw-

ing up with the *Huron*. The fire from the long gun was kept up at intervals, which interfered somewhat with her sailing, and she was obliged to yaw widely to avoid shooting away her own foremast. The schooner was within three hundred yards of the *Huron* when she opened her fire upon the pirate, and at the same moment, the ship's mainmast fell over the side. Of course, the pirate had now nothing to do but to run alongside and board; but the vessel in the offing had been coming up all this time, and was now made out to be a brig-of-war. She had, of course, seen the firing, and witnessed the fall of the ship's mainmast. When first observed, she had been far to windward of the ship. The two latter vessels were about ten miles from the land, and the pirate captain began to calculate his chances.

"I think," said he to Elliot, "that the fellow intends to get inside of us and cut us off from the land."

"Curse him," returned Red Knife, "what can he do then? The ship is crippled, and he can't join in the chase; and our schooner can outsail the brig—"

"But look yonder," returned Diego. "I don't like those mare's tails; we shall have a puff of wind—"

Just then, a shot from the ship passed between Diego and his lieutenant, and struck down Richards, the Indian of whom we have spoken. Diego stamped on the deck, and swore that he would have revenge if he hung in chains for it an hour afterward.

"Brig or no brig," said he, "we will cut the throats of the rascals who fired the shot."

In a few moments after these words were uttered the pirate schooner was under the stern of the *Huron*. The crew of the latter were on the taffrail and quarter-railing with various weapons in their hands. They threw down logs of wood, pig-iron, and even hot water upon the deck of the pirate, which did little hurt to the fierce and motley crew, but exasperated them to such a degree, that it was evident to the ship's company that they had but little mercy to expect. One pirate undertook to climb in the cabin windows, when the steward cut his nose clean from his face by one blow with his carving-knife. The man yelled and fell back into the water. All this was the work of a moment, for the pirates had begun to run on board the ship as soon as they had got near enough to do so. They went over the stern like rats, and a fierce contest ensued. The cries, the spouting of blood, the rage of the combatants, and the desperate valor with which the ship's crew and officers defended themselves are indescribable.

The contest was, however, short. Not a soul was spared by the pirates. One man ran up the main rigging, but was brought down by a discharge from Elliot's pistol. Both he and Diego were wounded, but not disabled. Covered with blood, Elliot sprang into the rigging, and announced that the brig was making a short board, and would be on them in a few minutes. The pirates retreated to the schooner, with what plunder they could readily seize, such as watches, jewelry, and money, and made sail from the ship, on board of which they had not left a living soul. Diego was careful to keep the ship between him and the brig, and when the latter opened her fire, many of her shot struck the hull or rigging of the wreck. This was not long, however, for the brig soon passed the schooner; but as the pursuer must alter his course every time he fired, the schooner had considerably increased the distance between them before evening.

"And now," said Diego, "we shall slip our necks from the halter in the darkness. The brig is falling astern as it is; and as soon as night sets in, we will run into the inlet, and in case he should twig us, and it comes to the worst, we can escape to the shore. I hope our next adventure will bring us more ingots and ounces; but, curse me! it does me good to think that we have sent so many to the Old Boy."

Elliot grinned and hugged his long knife as he remembered that several throats had been severed by it. Diego asked him below, and they drank together, and swore eternal friendship—a friendship cemented by blood, for their hands absolutely stuck together on account of the gore which was on

them. While the pirate chief and the lieutenant were thus enjoying the bottle and the charms of piratical friendship, they heard the coils of rigging thrown down upon the deck, and then a running and stamping overhead. Diego thrust his head up from the companionway, and soon ascertained the cause. A sudden squall had arisen. The brig was seen in the distance, bowing to the gale, the spray flying all around her, and her topsails blowing out straight. The sheets had either parted, or been purposely let go. Diego gave orders to take in sail, and was just in time, for the white foam of the approaching gale came madly on, as if the sea grew pale with affright. The shrieking of the winds, the slatting of the sails, and the rattling of the blocks combined to make an uproar deafening of itself; but the shouts of Diego, and the curses of his men, rendered the confusion worse confounded. The squall struck the schooner and she was tossed on her beam-ends immediately, several men going into the sea. The vessel righted slowly as the sails were rent from the hoops, and then went madly careering before the blast.

Thus they drove before it an hour or more, when through the mist they beheld a dark body coming down upon them. "The brig!" exclaimed several voices at once, and the next moment she passed so near that a brick might have been thrown upon her deck by the pirate craft. For several moments the most fearful apprehensions existed on the part of the pirate crew, for the brig seemed to be about to plunge directly upon her quarter, and in that case not one of the schooner's crew would have survived to relate the catastrophe. As the brig appeared suddenly, so she was very soon lost sight of in the darkness. The schooner drove on, the wind now blowing directly toward the Florida coast.

Diego got out his chests in the cabin, and declared his belief that shipwreck was inevitable. When this was told to the crew, some swore, some blasphemed, and some trembled and prayed; and it is probable that whether they swore, prayed or blasphemed, the one was actuated by no better motives than the other—for either of them would have cut a throat on the next day if it had been in their power.

Still the schooner drove on, and the tempest increased. The pirate had escaped the vengeance of man to encounter that of the elements. The night was dark, and there was scarcely a hope of saving life if the vessel should strike. When at length, toward morning, a reef was discovered and the surf breaking over it, glistening amid the darkness, there was much less emotion evinced than one might have expected. Evils long feared are generally less terrible in the reality than in the anticipation.

The light vessel shot ahead upon the billows, and passing between two ledges of rocks, approached the shore. So far every man was safe; but now came the end—the bounds which could not be passed. The white beach was already visible through the darkness, when the schooner unexpectedly brought up against a sunken rock, with a violent shock that threw every man off his feet. Once more was the light bark tossed on high by the billows, and it came down upon the rock with a crash that sent her foremast over the side, and was almost stunning in its effect on the crew. One yell of despair was heard as the timber parted and the fragments of the shattered vessel floated in toward the shore.

The morning came, and one man might have been seen seated on a high rock that overlooked the sea, his clothes rent and his face bloody. That man was Elliot. All but him of that bloody and barbarous crew had perished on the preceding night. Some had at once sunk to rise no more, some had been killed by the pieces of wreck against which they had been dashed, and more had been drowned in their attempts to reach the shore. Elliot alone had safely gained the beach, and to what peculiar circumstances he was indebted for safety, he knew not.

There he sat on the rock, once more alone and without employment, sadly bruised by the pieces of the wreck which he had encountered on his way to the beach. After taking a long nap, Elliot arose somewhat refreshed and looked about him. Sand-hills

and small clusters of trees were the principal objects in sight. He set out on his travels inland and late in the afternoon he reached a villa inhabited by a French gentleman. Here he told a very plausible story about being shipwrecked in a merchant brig, and was fed and lodged for the night.

In the morning Red Knife set out again upon his travels, after having stolen several silver spoons from the house of his entertainer. Toward night he reached a small hamlet on the seaboard, where he succeeded in stealing a small sail-boat in which he immediately put to sea, being determined to reach Havana if possible in this frail craft. Fortunately, there was a breaker of water in the boat, and he trusted to a few provisions which he had secured by trading off one of his silver spoons for provender during the voyage.

The wind was favorable, and for a while Elliott congratulated himself on his prospects; but he had scarcely got ten miles from land before he espied a sail. He knew that the vessel must be very near or he could not have seen her from so low a position. He hoped that she would pass without discovering him, especially as her two masts and something in her manner of sailing reminded him strongly of the brig which had chased the schooner just before the gale. This reflection frightened him; but when he came to reflect that the brig's people knew nothing of him, personally, and could not have seen him on board the schooner, his spirits revived. At one time an idea occurred to him that he would try to get on board the brig and enroll himself among her crew. Then he gave up the idea and resolved to trust to chance, and take whatever fortune sent him, without being particular whether he was picked up by the brig or kept on his way to Havana.

As night soon after set in, and he lost sight of the brig in the darkness, he supposed that his boat had not been discovered, and, upon the whole, he liked this turn of fortune about as well as the reverse, and was felicitating himself on soon reaching port, when he heard a voice coming out of the darkness and the gruff cry of "Boat, ahoy!"

He then saw something moving darkly through the water, which was soon recognized by him as a man-of-war's cutter.

"Hallo!" cried the midshipman in the stern, as the cutter came up head and head with the sail-boat, "where are you cruising to, my good fellow?"

"Bound to Havana," returned Red Knife, coolly.

"It seems to me this is a new kind of way of going to sea," said the midshipman.

"You'd better come on board till we overhaul your papers," and he pointed to a signal-lantern which was just then rising slowly from the water, until it remained stationary at the mizzen-peak of a vessel at no great distance, but which Red Knife knew very well must be the brig-of-war which he had observed before the sun went down.

Red Knife was not over pleased at this mode of address, though he knew the abrupt manner of men-of-war's-men and sailors generally.

"Come aboard the cutter," said the midshipman, ordering three of his boat's crew to take charge of the sail-boat and bring her to the brig.

Red Knife obeyed, trying to assume an air of indifference, which he was far from feeling. Could it be possible that he was known to anybody on board the brig? After all his escapes to be taken and executed as a pirate was too horrible a fate to think of, and he felt rather down-spirited when he ascended to the deck of the man-of-war. The midshipman spoke a few words to the commander of the brig, who came forward and said to Elliot:

"So, my man, you are bound to Havana. Why do you take the light for your voyage?"

"I have just heard," said Elliot, "that my brother is at the point of death, and having no other vessel in which I could take passage, I started in my boat."

The captain eyed Red Knife very closely by the light of a battle lantern, but the pirate knew that he had never seen his face before, and felt very little fear of detection.

"Well, your yarn is plausible enough," said the captain, at length; "but can you tell

me whether you have seen anything of a small schooner off the coast recently, and what has become of her?"

Elliot replied that he had seen such a vessel from the bluffs, but he knew nothing about her whatever.

The captain seemed satisfied, but gave orders that the sail-boat should be detained and that Elliot should remain on board.

"I am going to touch at Havana," said he, "and will put you on shore when we get there. I don't think it safe for you to go in your boat. Why, man, what would you do in such a gale as we had the other night?"

Although Elliot was not pleased with the manner in which the captain had last spoken to him, he had no other very particular objections to remaining on board the brig. As he went forward among the men, he saw an old quarter-master dodge behind a cluster of the seamen, who were gathered about the mast, and hurried aft as if desirous to avoid seeing him, and to avoid being seen by him. He did not see this man's face, but there was something in the general outline of his form that looked familiar, and his apprehensions became very painful.

He, however, put a good face on the matter, and began to talk and laugh with the brig's crew as if he felt perfectly at ease. On the next day, Elliot tried to get a view at this quarter-master, but the latter evidently avoided him, and whenever Elliot looked at him, he turned away his face. But what completed the terror of the pirate was to see the captain conversing stealthily with his quarter-master on the next day, when both of them cast sly glances at Elliot as they talked.

He could not doubt that he was the subject of their conversation. But who was the quarter-master? He was destined not to make the discovery until the brig reached Havana.

Now, it was his purpose to pretend perfect ignorance of this quarter-master, and of the conversation which had passed between him and the captain. The brig came to an anchor under the guns of the Moro Castle, and Elliot caught a full view of the quarter-master's countenance as he stood near the taffrail with the signals in his hand. The British flag was hoisted at the brig's peak, and the officers came off from the shore. Elliot saw the quarter-master and captain conversing with them and several times casting stealthy glances at him.

Red Knife could recollect that he had seen the quarter-master somewhere; but where he was unable to tell.

There was something in his looks which did not exactly please Elliot, and he resolved to keep his eye upon the man. At night he crept along the other side of the deck as far as the mainmast, and there he sat like a cat watching the motions of the quarter-master.

The quarter-master, after fidgeting about the quarter-deck awhile, turned and looked cautiously forward to the spot where Elliot had been standing, and seeming to be satisfied, suddenly turned and descended into the cabin. Elliot's suspicions were aroused, and he passed quickly aft and stood near the skylight, when he overheard his name mentioned in the cabin by the captain.

That was enough. He perceived that he had been entrapped. Elliot knew that he was not safe a moment while he remained on board. He went to the fore-castle, and letting himself down by the cable into the water, struck out for the shore, although he felt almost certain of being discovered and brought back to the brig.

"What's that in the water?" he overheard one of the midshipmen say to somebody on board.

"A man—a deserter!" was the reply.

"Push off—man the third cutter here!" was also heard very distinctly.

Red Knife at once gave himself up for lost. He swam on, however, until he found the boat within a few feet of him, when he turned toward it.

"I am the man," said he, "that you picked up at sea."

To his surprise, the midshipmen in the boat paused to confer together. He quickly perceived that, whatever suspicions might be entertained of his true character on board, these men knew nothing of it. Taking advantage of that circumstance, he again urged

his claims to be permitted to go about his business.

"But why did you not speak to the captain, and go ashore like a man, instead of skulking off in this way in the night?" demanded one of the midshipmen.

"Because the captain has been engaged all day with others," replied Elliot readily, "and I could get no chance to speak to him."

That sounded like the truth, and while the midshipmen reflected upon his words, he added:

"I shall send for my boat to-morrow; but to-night I am in a hurry to see my brother, who lies at the point of death on shore."

The midshipmen then, with an oath or two, turned the head of their boat toward the brig, and ordered the crew to give way and hurry on board.

As soon as Elliot found himself once more free, he swam as fast as possible for the shore. But he was not to get off so easily. Before he had gained much more than half the distance to the shore, he again heard the sound of oars behind him; and this time they were pulled with a vigor that left no doubt on his mind about the real grounds of their pursuit. He felt he had been betrayed by the quartermaster, and that he was now engaged in a struggle for life. He could now hear the shouts of the officer who commanded the boat, and they were uttered in a tone that told him what his destiny would be if he was overtaken. Just as he had begun to despair, his foot touched the bottom. He sprang on his feet and ran. He directed his course to the house where he had met the Indian, after having been called from the window by a young woman. He ran for life, with more than one pursuer at his heels, but after considerable doublings and turning, he found the door he sought, and darted into it. He hurried up to the apartment where he had seen the girl, and found her there. He briefly stated the fact of being pursued to her, and she thrust him into an old chest and piled a few clothes upon him. But his pursuers were heard to pass the house, and he was soon relieved from the inconveniences of his hiding.

As no inquiry had been made for him in the neighborhood, Elliot ventured to go into the street the next day. He had no sooner made his appearance than he was seized by the gens-d'armes, a few of whom had been watching for him in the neighborhood of the house where he had secreted himself. He was thrown into prison, and on the same day the quartermaster of the brig appeared against him. It seems that this quartermaster was a pardoned pirate, and had once had Red Knife pointed out to him. Not being sure, however, that Elliot was the man, when he first saw him come on board the brig, he had only expressed his suspicions to the captain, who advised him to lead the suspected man into a confession of his true name and character.

The trial of Elliot was short, and he was doomed to die. He exhibited great firmness at his death, which was consummated in the presence of thousands of witnesses.

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Order of Argument,
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Assemblies,
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Order of Business and
Proceedings,
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can be Treated,
The "Question." How to
be Considered,
Rights to the Floor,
Rights of a Speaker as
Against the Chair,
Calling Yeas and Nays,
Interrupting a Vote,
Organization of Delibera-
tive Bodies, Conven-
tions, Annual or Gen-
eral Assemblies

Preliminary Organization
Permanent Organization,
The Order of Business,
Considering Reports, Pa-
pers, etc.,
Of Subsidiary Motions,
The Due Order of Con-
sidering Questions,
Committees,
Objects of a Committee,
Their Powers,
How Named,
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cedure,
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